MAR 25 1976

Commentary

Volume Sixty-one, Number Four, April 1976

MOSES FOR MODERNS
Edward Grossman

SALVATION UNLIMITED
John P. Sisk

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION & ARRY WOLFSON
Leon Wieseltier

Making the World Safe for Communism

Norman Podhoretz

BSERVATIONS
REVISIONIST LITERARY CRITICISM
Irene H. Chayes

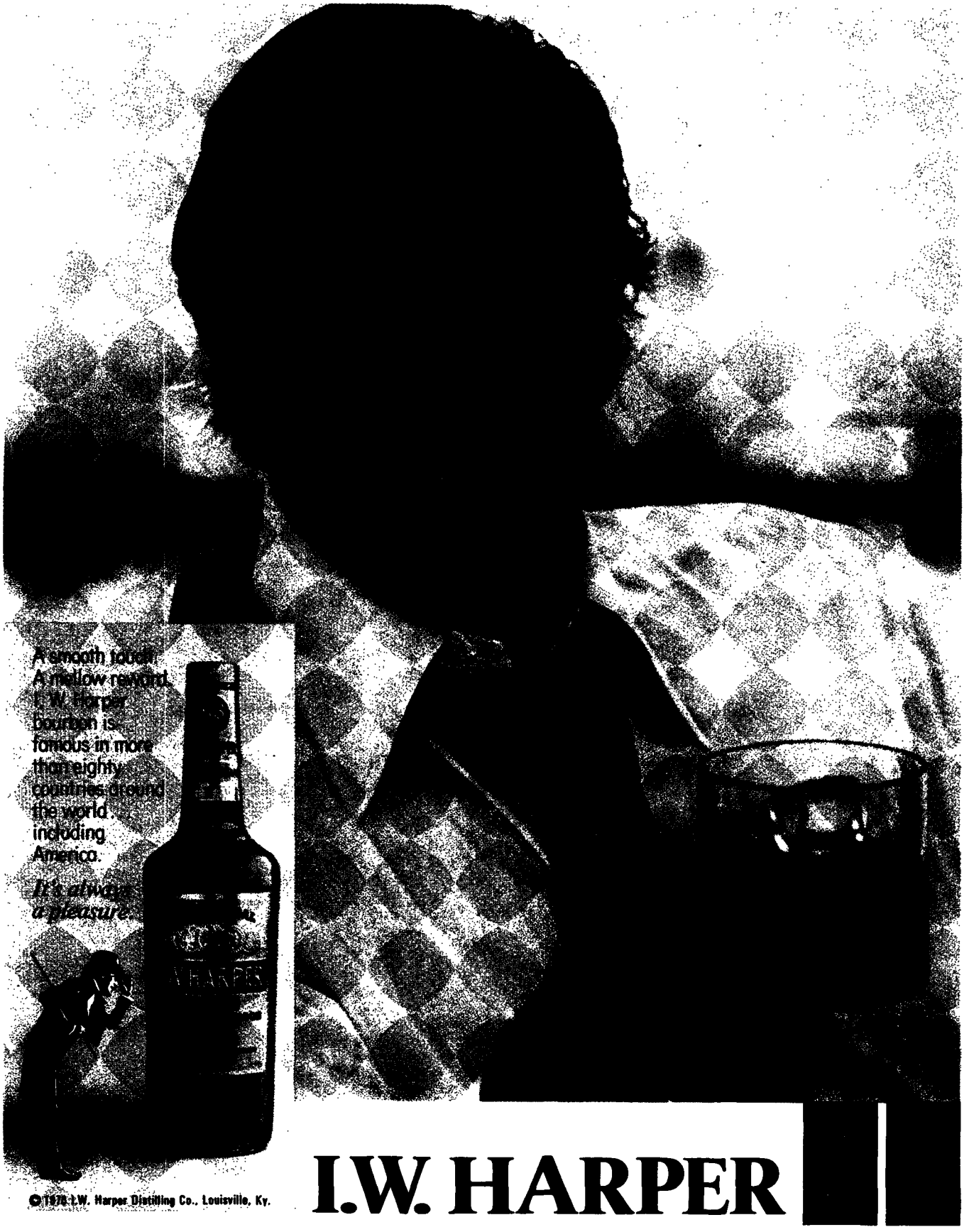
MUSIC
COPLAND AS AMERICAN COMPOSER
Samuel Lipman

THEATER
ALAS, POOR HAMLET
Jack Richardson

BOOKS IN REVIEW
Chester E. Finn, Jr.
Peter L. Berger
Robert Alter
Jeffrey Marsh
Bernard K. Johnpoll
Joseph Shattan

Published by the American Jewish Committee / $2.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



©1976 I.W. Harper Distilling Co., Louisville, Ky.

I.W. HARPER

A famous American in Italy and around the world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Like no place else.

friendly, foreign, nearby and still your best buy

Come visit unique Mexico now. You'll enjoy established resorts like Acapulco, Cozumel, Guadalajara, La Paz, Mazatlan, Merida, Mexico City, Puerto Vallarta, newer ones like Cabo San Lucas, Loreto, Mulege, all in Baja and just opened resorts like Cancun on the Mexican Caribbean Coast and Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo on Mexico's West Coast about 125 miles north of Acapulco.
And be assured, the welcome will be as delightful as the weather.

MEXICO

Mexican National Tourist Council • Mexican Ministry of Tourism

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

VOLUME 61 NUMBER 4 *APRIL 1976*

Articles
31 Making the World Safe for Communism *Norman Podhoretz*
42 Moses for Moderns *Edward Grossman*
52 Salvation Unlimited *John P. Sisk*
57 Philosophy, Religion & Harry Wolfson *Leon Wieseltier*

Observations
65 Revisionist Literary Criticism *Irene H. Chayes*

Music
70 Copland as American Composer *Samuel Lipman*

Theater
74 Alas, Poor Hamlet *Jack Richardson*

Letters
6 from *Julius Rudel, Robert B. Goldmann, Elias M. Schwarzbart, Esten Davis, Alexander Firestone, T.R. Fyvel, Meyer Levin, Barbara Nauer, Frank Walke, P.T. Bauer, E.A. Socolow, William S. Pechter, George Siegel, Joseph Epstein,* and others

Books in Review
78 Simple Justice, by Richard Kluger *Chester E. Finn, Jr.*
82 The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, by Daniel Bell *Peter L. Berger*
83 World of Our Fathers, by Irving Howe *Robert Alter*
86 Making Democracy Safe for Oil, by Christopher T. Rand; Multinational Oil, by Neil H. Jacoby; The Seven Sisters, by Anthony Sampson *Jeffrey Marsh*
90 American Legacy: The Left in American Politics, by James Weinstein *Bernard K. Johnpoll*
94 The Road to Ramadan, by Mohamed Heikal; The War of Atonement, by Chaim Herzog *Joseph Shattan*

Editor: Norman Podhoretz
Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy
Managing Editor: Marion Magid
Associate Editor: Brenda Brown
Contributing Editors: Robert Alter, Milton Himmelfarb, Walter Laqueur
Business Manager: Ronald Greene
Production Manager: Bruce Lodi
Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.00, $20 a year; 3 years $54; 5 years $80—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

Copyright © 1976 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A sip of Sabra should never be hurried. It took 5000 years to get to you.

Sabra. The liqueur with roots that reach back to antiquity. With a taste as unique as Israel. The ancient land from which it comes.

A desert that became green and bloomed orange. With trees bearing Jaffa oranges, laden with a rich nectar to tempt all people.

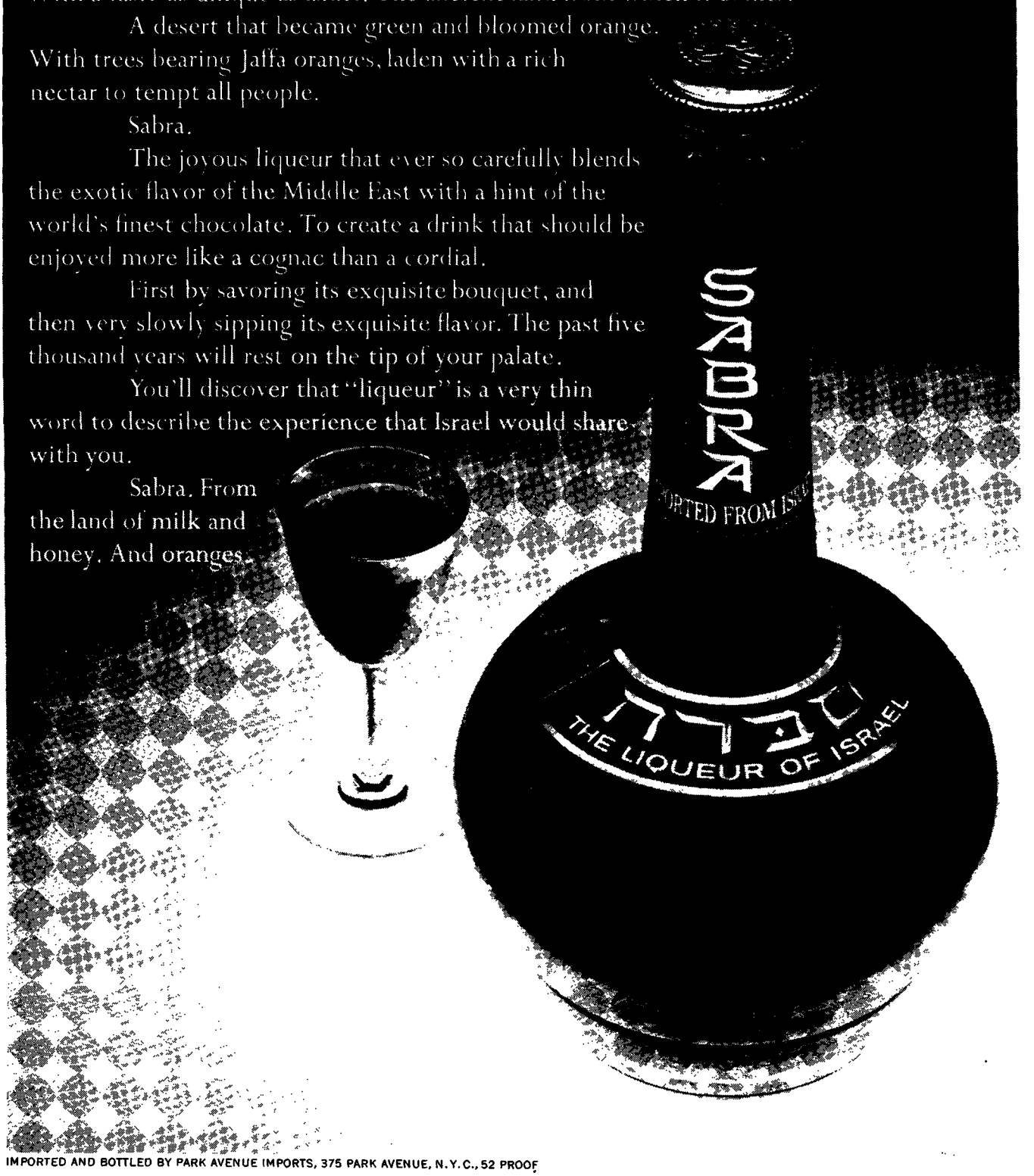
Sabra.

The joyous liqueur that ever so carefully blends the exotic flavor of the Middle East with a hint of the world's finest chocolate. To create a drink that should be enjoyed more like a cognac than a cordial.

First by savoring its exquisite bouquet, and then very slowly sipping its exquisite flavor. The past five thousand years will rest on the tip of your palate.

You'll discover that "liqueur" is a very thin word to describe the experience that Israel would share with you.

Sabra. From the land of milk and honey. And oranges.

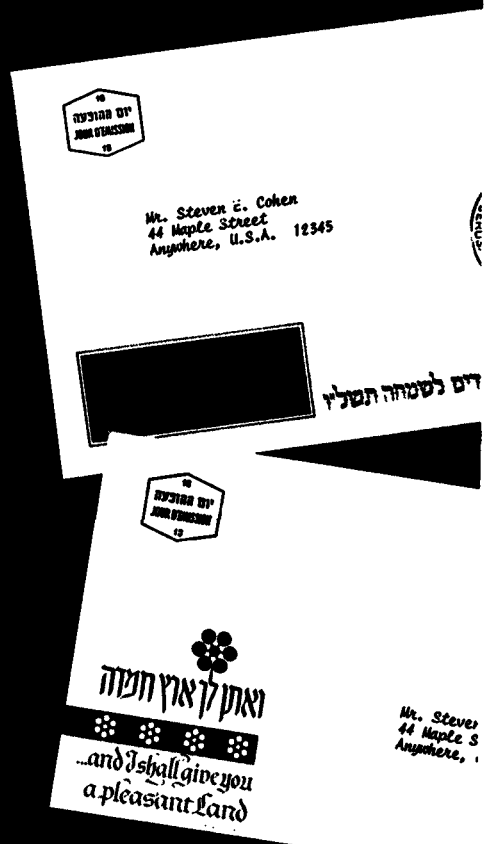


IMPORTED AND BOTTLED BY PARK AVENUE IMPORTS, 375 PARK AVENUE, N.Y.C., 52 PROOF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

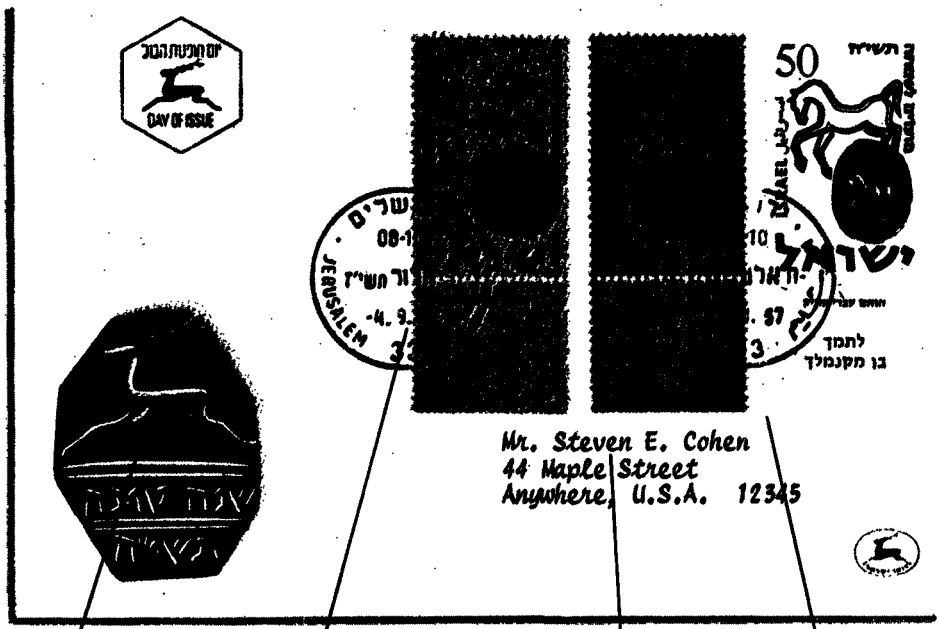
Now, collect and preserve a beautiful panorama of Israeli history to enjoy today and be treasured by generations to come.

- For a surprisingly modest fee, you can receive official First Day Covers for every new commemorative stamp issued by the State of Israel.
- Each First Day Cover will be individually addressed and sent to the name and address you designate.
- And, your membership helps B'nai Brith and the State of Israel.



First Day Cover [illegible] ectors items.

When a new Israeli stamp is issued, only one post office (Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv, etc.) is selected for the coveted "first day of issue" cancellation. On that day, and at that post office, is the only time and place that a new commemorative stamp can be postmarked "First Day of Issue". A First Day Cover combines the new stamp and the all important first day cancellation with an appropriately designed envelope to create a truly striking limited edition panorama of Israel today and the heritage of the Jewish people.



What is an Israeli first day cover?

CACHET
An officially authorized envelope with an illustration (cachet) specially designed for the new stamp issue.

FIRST DAY CANCELLATION
Each cover will be individually post-marked on the "First Day of Issue" of the new stamp, at the post office of first issue.

PERSONALIZATION
Each cover will bear the full name and address of each member.

OFFICIAL ISRAEL STAMPS
New issue commemorative postage stamps from the State of Israel.

© 1975 Israeli Postal Collectors Society

RESTRICTED TO PERSONAL USE
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Charter Memberships now available.

Now, you and your family can share in the development of Israel — a unique triumph for the Jewish people — through Israeli Commemorative Stamps.

Only important subjects are chosen for the dramatically beautfiul stamps of Israel. Passover, "Let My People Go", Hanukkah, the Anniversary of Israel's Birth, and famous synagogues are just a few of the subjects that have been commemorated in the past.

Now, the Israeli Postal Collectors Society is making available on a yearly subscription basis, a complete collection of Israeli First Day Covers.

Membership makes it easy to build an outstanding collection

Membership in the Israeli Postal Collectors Society makes it easy to collect Israeli First Day Covers. The Society will handle all details of ensuring that you receive all Israeli First Day Covers soon after they are issued.

Israel normally issues approximately 20 commemorative stamps each year. You will receive up to this many issues at a basic annual cost of only $19.95 plus an annual membership fee of $10.00 (total yearly cost of $29 95).

Mr. Steven E. Cohen
44 Maple Street
Anywhere, U.S.A. 12345
exodus of north african jews to israel
FOR I WILL RESTORE HEALTH UNTO THEE
AND I WILL HEAL THEE OF THY WOUNDS
Israeli Paintings

As a member, each of your Covers will be sent to you with a specially designed and die-cut display page which includes background information on the Cover. These display pages are available only to members of the Society.

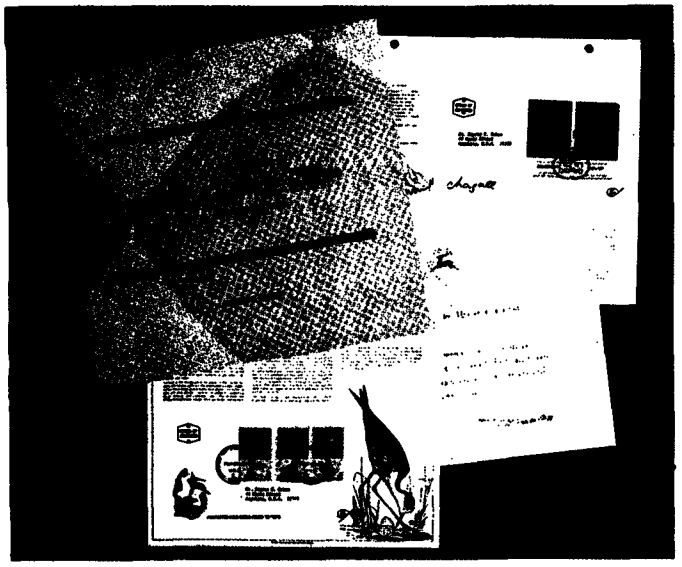
Just think of the educational value alone inherent in a fine collection of Israel's most worthy subjects — a true amalgam of Jewish art and history.

Your Membership Helps B'nai B'rith and Israel

30% of your membership fee goes to B'nai B'rith and the causes it supports. And, of course, Israel benefits directly through the Society's purchase of Israeli first day covers.

Our Guarantee:

If the initial materials fail to satisfy you, simply return them within ten days for a full and unquestioned refund.



You'll receive everything needed to build and maintain a personalized collection.

Become a charter member and receive an important collector's bonus at no additional charge.

The Society makes available to its new members a beautiful collector's album. This album will be hand-embossed with your name. It looks expensive — and it is — but we will send it to you at no additional cost as an introductory membership bonus.

Israeli Postal Collectors Society

44 West State Street Westport, Conn. 06880

CHARTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Israeli Postal Collectors Society
44 West State Street, Westport, Connecticut 06880

Enclosed is $29.95* for a one-year charter membership. This guarantees me up to 20 Israeli First Day Covers complete with descriptive display pages. I will also receive a free special collector's album embossed with my name.

My First Day Covers should be addressed as follows:

Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. _____
(please print)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please emboss the personalized collector's album as follows:

_____
(carefully print name to be shown on album)

This is a: ☐ Personal Membership ☐ Gift Membership
I enclose ☐ Check ☐ Money Order
Charge my: ☐ American Express ☐ Master Charge ☐ BankAmericard

(If a gift membership, please provide your name and address on a separate piece of paper. A card announcing your gift will be sent to the member.)

Signature _____ Card Act. No. _____ Expiration Date _____

*Connecticut resident, add $2.10 sales tax. Make check or money order payable to IPCS.

COM-4

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Elmer L. Winter, *President*

The Commentary Publication Committee

Edward E. Elson, *Chairman*

Norman Alexander
Donald M. Blinken
Charles D. Breitel
Theodore Ellenoff
Richard C. Ernst
Maurice Glinert
Robert H. Haines
Sydney M. Kaye
Lewis J. Laventhol
Richard Maass
Bess Myerson
Ned Pines
Frederick P. Rose
David Sher
John Slawson
Harry Steiner
Alan M. Stroock*
Laurence A. Tisch
Ben Touster
Gerard Weinstock

**Honorary Member*

Letters from Readers

The Wagner Question

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Wagner Comes to Broadway" [Samuel Lipman, Music, January] is a vivid example of critical analysis which seeks to bring a work of art and its performers into line with the preconceived notions of the critic. The cast, director, and conductor of the *Meistersinger* in question hardly want to bite the hand that writes such lavish if anonymous praise, but from that "pinnacle of the City Opera's achievement" they have a vantage point of objectivity which the critic neither sought nor attained.

This "heavily cut" production of *Meistersinger* eliminated exactly seventeen minutes of music, twenty minutes if the conductor is particularly slow. Nor is your critic's watch very accurate, for the performance ends at ten minutes of twelve, and he fails to mention that it begins at seven o'clock, a full hour earlier than our regular starting time. The fact that the evening passed so quickly and this was a "comfortable" *Meistersinger* (whatever that might mean) is another tribute to our performance, or possibly to the seats in our theater.

Your critic, who sings our praises in English, decided that it is a difficult language in which to sing, yet this is the language of Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley, not to mention the inimitable American musical with the incomparable lyrics of Porter, Gershwin, Hammerstein, and Sondheim. If it is only in German that the German characterizations can be truly appreciated, then we should perhaps insist upon *Bartered Bride* in Czech, *La Bohème* in French, and *Turandot* in Chinese. Somehow I am reminded of the incompetent stage director of *Carmen* who, lacking powers of dramatic persuasion, shouted at a floundering chorus, "Haven't any of you been to Seville?"

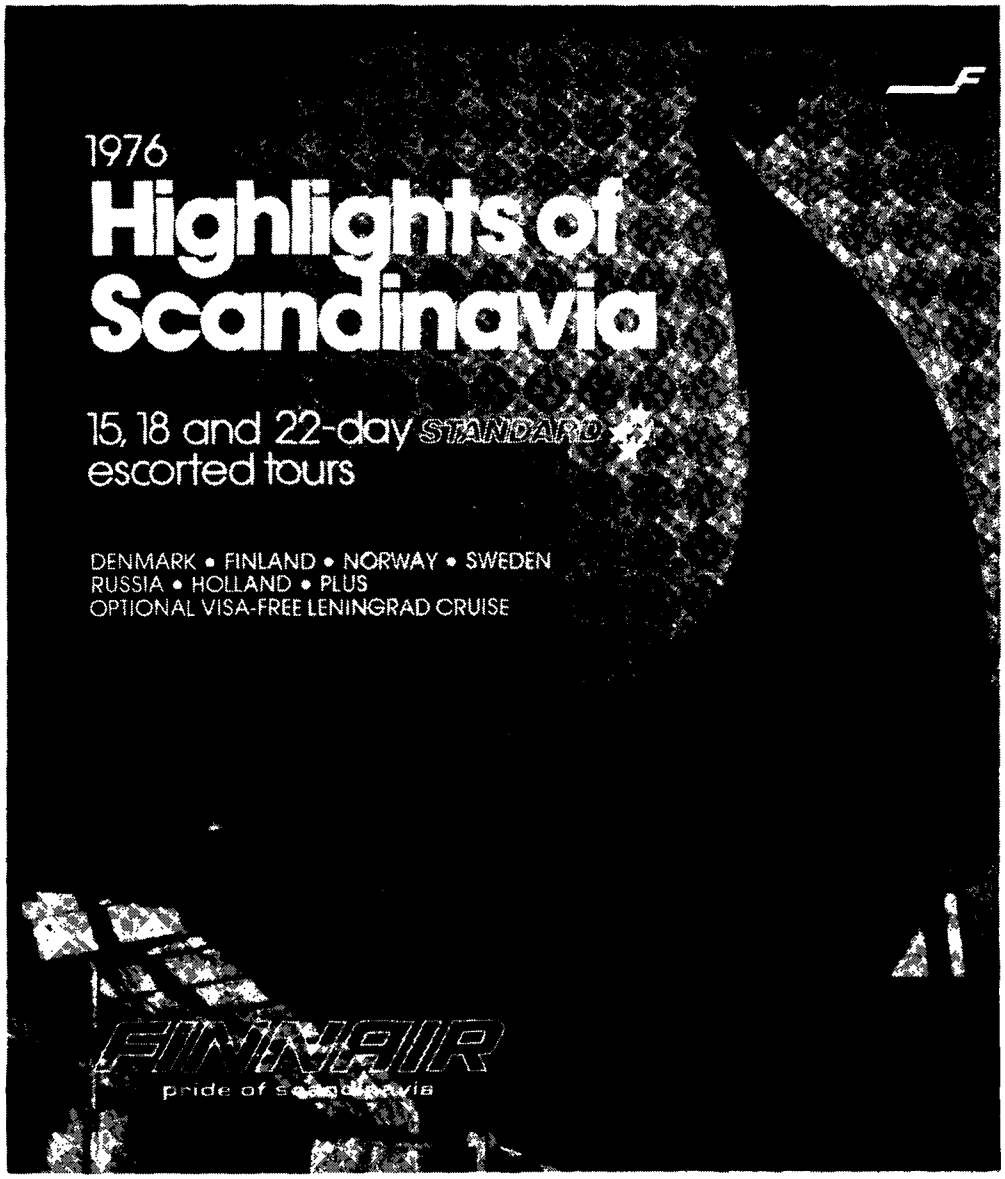
Whether he does so in German or in English, we would advise your critic, as well as those who read his article, to read the *Meistersinger* libretto. He will discover that Hans Sachs does not "trick" Beckmesser into stealing the prize song. He only assures him that he (Sachs) has not written it, which is true, and since Beckmesser has already appropriated the song, permits him to keep it.

Beckmesser is not beaten because he is a Jew or because he represents for Wagner the critic Hanslick (who was at best 50 per-cent Jewish, but certainly 100 per-cent a critic). He is beaten by David because he is caught serenading Magdalena whom he had mistaken for Eva. But the point of the fight is that most of Nuremberg becomes embroiled in it. Are we to understand that all of Nuremberg, or at least the half that gets beaten, is Jewish? Your critic overlooks the true anti-Semitism of old Nuremberg, for Beckmesser, were he a Jew, could not have been a member, let alone the leading member, of a guild, nor could he have been a suitor for the hand of the Aryan Eva. To the best of my knowledge not even in the darkest days of Nazism in Germany was Beckmesser ever presented as a Jew. If your critic does not recommend a yellow star for this "symbol of the crime of the Jews," would a performer with a hook nose suffice?

Of course Wagner was an anti-Semite, but he was also an artist who fortunately knew the difference between art and poster art, between beauty and propaganda. His anti-Semitic articles were written in words which he did not set to music. He was also a great pragmatist and insisted that the Jewish conductor Levy do the first performance of *Parsifal*. It does seem arbitrary to interpret one man's art in terms of his politics when we cannot do the same with others more reticent about their political outlook. Wagner's stress on German art was part of a centuries-old unification movement, and it is only in retrospect, with the horrors attendant upon its all-too-great success, that we recoil from his nationalism. Verdi was at least as nationalistic about the Italian *Risorgimento*, but he is not blamed for "providing the shoulders" on which Mussolini's anti-Semitic fascism stood. The feminist movement could work up a case against Puccini, with his sacrificial heroines and his "macho" attitudes toward sex. Our next performance of *Madama Butterfly* may be picketed.

All of this is nonsense; we, in fact, particularly chose to do *Meistersinger* in English because of its humanism, humor, and affecting warmth. The peroration by Sachs to German art at the end of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Discover the unexpected

on Finnair's "Highlights of Scandinavia."

This summer, see *more* of Scandinavia, in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, of course. And Finland, too—an unexpected discovery. *All* of Scandinavia lets you find yourself in the world's most progressive countries . . . with scenic beauty unmatched in the world. You're *really welcome*, too, wherever you go, greeted (in English) with genuine friendliness.

Finnair *"Highlights of Scandinavia"* tours are fully-escorted 15 to 22-day vacations that show you everything, the capitals to the fjords, in comfort and style. There's informative reading in the colorful brochures. So ask a travel agent, or send the coupon. Discover a welcome change, in Finnair's Scandinavia.

Finnair, Dept. C4
580 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10036

Please send "Highlights of Scandinavia" brochures and more Finnair tour information.

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____

My Travel Agent is:_____

FINNAIR
pride of scandinavia

Offices in: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Toronto.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opera stands as a thing of its time and place and is no more Nazi than the triumphal march of *Aida* is militaristic or the fervid shouts of "*guerra*" signify Verdi's praise of war. That we cut part of that peroration was not an effort to turn away from "the horrid." It is a traditional cut (and not *all* traditions are memories of the last bad performance), one very likely sanctioned by Wagner himself. Significantly, one now finds many critical voices in German publications raised against uncut performances of Wagner. It is enlightening to note that your critic, who second-guesses and (mis)construes the composer throughout, when it comes to his last-act cut modestly states that it is impossible to tell what Wagner's "real intentions" were, that they involve the psychology of his relations with his wife, etc., etc. Never give the opposition the benefit of the doubt! As for the cut being "harmonically clumsy," it happens to go from C major to C major—nothing could be easier or more natural; it seems to have been made to order, possibly by Wagner. We might even have left the section in, if it didn't come so late in the opera and didn't seem so tedious at that point. We were really much more concerned with art than a cover-up.

One of the advantages in writing such a lengthy polemic is that one can easily forget at the end what one has stated at the beginning. Thus, although with *Meistersinger* the New York City Opera, according to your critic, reached its "pinnacle," the reader is later asked to question why this opera "was seen as the proper field for the exercise of the company's undoubted virtues." Obviously, because with it we reached that "pinnacle."

The real question is why your critic is so patronizing toward the New York City Opera (he even writes a review without mentioning the name of a single performer). Whatever our faults, we are never patronizing, certainly not to our audience. We do not popularize opera, we perform it so well that more people enjoy it. We do not shorten works, we perform them artfully so that time seems to go by quickly; we do not turn our face from "the horrid," but we do not seek it out where it does not exist. We performed the opera in English not to make its content less accessible but to make it more accessible to the public. It would appear self-evident, except to one intent upon distortion, that were we determined to conceal the true nature of the opera, we would have done it in German, not English.

Were the critic less preoccupied with clichés than with facts, he could not have made some of his patronizing assertions about the company. I am delighted that he finds us young and attractive, but "less experienced"? Norman Bailey (a name at last!) has sung the role of Sachs at Bayreuth and Covent Garden, he has recorded it with Solti, and he is considered one of the greatest exponents of that role anywhere. John Alexander (Stolzing) sings at the Met and in most opera houses of the world. The conductor performs regularly in Paris, Vienna, and Israel. Do Sills, Domingo, Niska, or Alexander (to mention only four of a legion) become more experienced as they walk west across Lincoln Center Plaza and instantly "less experienced" as they walk back east? Is it a fault that most great singers perform with us before they are *old* and *un*attractive?

Finally, to answer a question posed earlier as to why your critic is so patronizing toward the New York City Opera, I submit it is because that company is run by a Jew. Unlike himself, to be sure, not a professional Jew, but one who came close to extinction by the Nazis. Sound paranoid? Not nearly as paranoid as the polemic that occasioned this response.

JULIUS RUDEL
New York City Opera
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel Lipman invents or misinterprets facts and situations in his review of the City Opera's *Meistersinger*.

First: Beckmesser is not tricked by Hans Sachs into stealing the poem. He steals it all by himself, without provocation, and Hans Sachs thereupon takes advantage of the theft for his own purposes. Quite a difference.

Pogner's tale of the lack of respect for the middle class by both the lower classes and the aristoc-

The most civilized hotel in New York. Maybe the world.

The Regency Hotel
Park Avenue at 61st Street, New York, N.Y. 10021. (212) 759-4100

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Which of YOUR stocks are now working AGAINST you?

Just for example, Value Line currently rates HALF this "portfolio" as likely to give **worse-than-average** price performance in the year ahead. (Value Line Survey, February 20, 1976.) Which five stocks do you think may be the "enemies within"?

AMER. TEL & TEL	**KLM ROYAL DUTCH**
COCA COLA	**MGM**
DISNEY	**POLAROID**
EASTMAN KODAK	**SEARS ROEBUCK**
FIRESTONE	**WOOLWORTH**

These are all excellent companies, but don't confuse a *company* with its *stock*. If five of the stocks were liquidated, we'd give this "portfolio" a much bigger chance of achieving better than average performance in the next 12 months.

If you have trouble sorting out the potential "drag-down" stocks in the list above, it may be even tougher with your own portfolio, where real dollars—and possibly your emotions too—are involved.

Yet identifying stocks which may be working *against* you is no less important than pinpointing those which may work most strongly *for* you. And you need to be able to do this on a continually current basis. Here's how Value Line helps:

RANKING 1600 STOCKS

Every week of the year, The Value Line Investment Survey, using computer-based programs developed over years of testing, ranks 1600 stocks—each *relative* to all the others—for *Probable Market Performance in the Next 12 Months*, as follows:

100 of the 1600 stocks are ranked 1 (Highest)
300 of the 1600 are ranked 2 (Above Average)
800 are ranked 3 (Average)
300 are ranked 4 (Below Average)
100 are ranked 5 (Lowest)

The ranks are designed to measure probabilities. We expect higher-ranked stocks to go up more in a rising market—or down less in a market drop—than lower-ranked stocks. And conversely . . .

We expect the 400 stocks ranked 4 or 5 for Performance to go DOWN MORE or UP LESS than all the rest of the 1200 stocks within the 12 months immediately ahead.

The presence of any of these low-ranked stocks in your portfolio will probably do some damage to your overall results in the next 12 months. We urge you to check your holdings at once against Value Line's current Performance ranks for 1600 stocks. A quick and easy way to do this is given below.

GETTING BETTER ODDS

Not every stock will perform in accordance with its rank in every 12-month span, but such a high percentage of stocks have performed in accordance with the Value Line ranks in the past for reasons that could not be explained by chance that . . .

. . . the odds definitely stand in your favor when you line up your stocks with the Value Line ranks.

Even if your primary objective is yield, or safety, or long-term appreciation, we suggest you stay away from stocks ranked 4 or 5 by Value Line for next-12-months Performance. You do not have to settle for below-average 12-month price prospects to get good yield and safety and long term potential which are *other* attributes that Value Line also evaluates for you systematically every week. Indeed, we suggest that *all* investors, as far as possible, stick with stocks ranked 1 or 2 for Performance in the next 12 months.

UPDATED EVERY WEEK

Every week—for EACH of 1600 stocks—The Value Line Investment Survey in its Summary of Advices and Index presents the up-to-date...

a) Rank for Relative Probable Price Performance in the Next 12 Months—ranging from 1 (Highest) down to 5 (Lowest).
b) Rank for Investment Safety (from 1 down to 5).
c) Estimated Yield in the Next 12 Months—(100 stocks offer yields of 8.4% and up—Value Line Feb. 20.)
d) Estimated Appreciation Potentiality in the Next 3 to 5 Years—showing the future "target" price range and the percentage price change indicated. (100 stocks are in the 235% to 1300% range—Value Line Feb. 20.)
e) Current price and P/E, plus estimated annual earnings and dividends in current 12 months.
f) The stock's Beta.
g) Very latest available quarterly earnings results and dividends, together with year-earlier comparisons.

In addition, each of the 1600 stocks is the subject of a comprehensive new *full-page Rating & Report* at least once every three months—including 23 series of vital financial and operating statistics going back 10 years and estimated 3 to 5 years into the future.

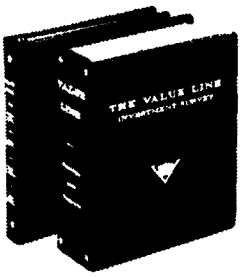
SPECIAL HALF-PRICE OFFER

If no member of your household has had a subscription to Value Line in the last two years you can now receive the complete Value Line Investment Survey for the next 12 weeks for only $29 (almost 50% off the regular rate). We make this special offer because we have found that a high percentage of those who once try Value Line for a short period stay with it on a long-term basis. The increased circulation enables us to provide this service for far less than would have to be charged to a smaller number of subscribers. Your trial will include all of the following:

EVERY WEEK a new SUMMARY OF ADVICES section (24 pages) . . . showing the current ratings of 1600 stocks for future relative Price Performance and Safety—together with their Estimated Yields and the latest earnings, dividends and P/E data.

EVERY WEEK a new RATINGS & REPORTS section (144 pages) . . . with full-page analyses of about 125 stocks. During the course of every 13 weeks, new full page reports like this are issued on all 1600 stocks, replacing and updating the previous reports. (It takes but a minute a week to file the new reports in your Value Line binder.)

EVERY WEEK a new SELECTION & OPINION section (4 pages)...with a detailed analysis of an Especially Recommended Stock—plus a wealth of investment background including the Value Line Composite Average of more than 1600 stocks.



PLUS THIS $35 BONUS . . . Value Line's complete 1800-page Investors Reference Service (sold separately for $35), with our latest full-page reports on all stocks under review—fully indexed for your immediate reference.

AND THIS BONUS, TOO . . . the 64-page booklet, "Investing in Common Stocks," which contains a wealth of information on security analysis and portfolio management.

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

You take no risk accepting this special offer. If you are not completely satisfied with The Value Line Investment Survey, just return the material you have received within 30 days for a full refund of your subscription.

To accept this invitation, simply fill in and mail the attached coupon today.

The Value Line Investment Survey

ARNOLD BERNHARD & CO., INC. • 5 EAST 44th STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

23ME01

☐ Begin my special 12-week trial to The Value Line Survey (limited once to any household every two years) and send me the Investors Reference Service and the booklet "Investing in Common Stocks" as a bonus. My check or money order for $29 is enclosed. (Trial subscriptions must be accompanied by payment.)

☐ I prefer one year (52 weeks) of Value Line, plus the bonus, Investors Reference Service and the booklet, "Investing in Common Stocks" for $248. (There are no restrictions with this offer.)

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me for $248

GUARANTEE: If dissatisfied for any reason, I may return the material within 30 days for a full refund of the fee I have paid.

SIGNATURE

NAME (please print)

ADDRESS APT. NO.

CITY

STATE ZIP

Not assignable without subscriber's consent. Foreign rates on request. Subscription fees are fully tax-deductible. (NY residents add applicable sales tax.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

racy is a social comment not unlike today's frustration of the "silent majority," about which we have read some thoughtful articles in COMMENTARY. Pogner's comments have no relationship to Sachs's unmistakably and (I agree) repulsive ultranationalistic oration that ends the opera. Mr. Lipman connects them without even explaining the alleged relationship between them.

Hans Sachs ridicules and ruins Beckmesser, but he is not an unqualified admirer of Stolzing's "modern" music, nor does he downgrade the value and role of the musical tradition of which Beckmesser is the ultrazealous guardian. The whole point of the final oration is a warning to Stolzing and all others who think like him not to have contempt for tradition and for the rules which Beckmesser so uncompromisingly seeks to uphold. What Sachs objects to in Beckmesser is his self-seeking personal motivation in exercising his artistic function, not the function itself. In fact, it is Sachs's greatness that he sees the value of tradition but is also open to talent that strikes out in new directions.

In sum, then, both Sachs and Beckmesser are a lot more complicated than Mr. Lipman pictures them, and the artistic values they represent are examined critically and thoughtfully in *Meistersinger*. The opera is not as one-dimensional as Mr. Lipman would have it.

It is also very doubtful, against this background, whether Beckmesser is the vehicle for Wagner's anti-Semitic purposes, as Mr. Lipman claims. Whatever the case may be, it's not as open and shut as in Mr. Lipman's piece, nor do we need to stretch and over- or mis-interpret things in *Meistersinger* in order to demonstrate Wagner's anti-Semitic attitude and propaganda. Wagner has done this explicitly and amply, and the evidence of both his essays and many of his actions in life is more than adequate to prove the point.

ROBERT B. GOLDMANN
Englewood, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The first duty of a critic is respect for the facts, but Samuel Lipman is a man with a mission, so he makes the New York City Opera's production of *Meistersinger* lie upon the bed of Procrustes so he can stretch, twist, or cut it to fit his thesis. . . .

For over one hundred years the musical world has naively taken for granted that *Meistersinger* is a gentle, light-hearted, humanistic comic opera and in its invincible ignorance has been unaware, or worse still, indifferent to the fact that the opera is filled with anti-Semitic poison. This "poison," according to Mr. Lipman, is concentrated in the person of Beckmesser who is not, as universally portrayed, the comic figure of a foolish old man seeking the love of a young girl but "the keystone of the great German arch" who "must be presented as a villain, not only personally but socially, not only individually but as a symbol of the crime of the Jews against the people" and who should be at least symbolically if not literally performed as if "wearing a yellow star."

Let us return, then, to the libretto. The setting is the medieval city of Nuremberg and the Mastersingers Guild. No Jew appears in the opera, no reference is made to Jews, and, of course, no Jew could possibly have been a guild member. Beckmesser, whom Mr. Lipman in his perfervid imagination conjures up as a hated Jewish symbol, is in fact a Christian senior member of the guild, a keeper of its rules, and suitor for the hand of the virginal Nordic maiden. So much for the anti-Semitism in the text of the opera.

Mr. Lipman makes much of the cut in the performance of the hymn to German art, reading into the omission the intent to conceal the true meaning of the opera. Aside from the fact that Wagner himself had considered excising it and that the cut is quite customary even in Germany, what does the hymn have to do with anti-Semitism? It does perhaps represent an appeal to nascent German nationalism, but the obvious enemy here is not the Jew but France. . . .

In order to link Wagner's anti-Semitism with the opera, Mr. Lipman unfortunately resorts to what must fairly be called deception. Referring to Wagner's anti-Semitic tract, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (*Jewry in Music*), he says in a paragraph supposedly summing up Wagner's article:

> The Jew as Wagner portrays him in this notorious tract possesses no culture of his own; at best he can only sing and talk in the language of the bazaar. Out of a mixture of tolerance and sloth, the Gentile world allows the Jew to compete for and win the highest prizes. Such tolerance is noble, but is extended at the cost of bondage to the Jew and the degeneration of a once-pure civilization. *What the lascivious Beckmesser wants from the Mastersingers and from the virginal Eva is precisely what the Jews want from the Gentile world: domination and the joy of corruption. Thus Beckmesser is not only the villain against whom the beautiful lovers must struggle; he is the link between Wagner's homely story of young love and Wagner's socio-political ideas. It is the evil represented by Beckmesser upon which Wagner relies to unify the two strands of his opera* [emphasis added].

The deception lies in the italicized sentences which represent Mr. Lipman's own opinions but are included in the same paragraph to make it appear to the unwary reader that Mr. Lipman is still summing up what Wagner himself said in that article which, of course, . . . was written some eighteen years before Wagner wrote *Meistersinger*.

Finally, what we see in Mr. Lipman's article is a classic case of inverted anti-Semitism. For a hundred years all the great Jewish conductors who have performed this opera, right up to Julius Rudel of the New York City Opera production, and all the great Jewish singers who have sung the leading roles, and all the great Jewish critics who have praised it, and all the Jewish operagoers who have loved it, are implicated in a great historic conspiracy to conceal the virulent, anti-Semitic message of *Meistersinger*, which now, thanks to Mr. Lipman, stands exposed before the world. . . .

ELIAS M. SCHWARZBART
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is true that Wagner was under the impression that the Viennese music critic Hanslick was Jewish, as he states in *Jewry in Music*, and there is no doubt that Beckmesser in the opera is a parody of Hanslick, but there is not one line in *Meistersinger* that can be interpreted as a parody of Hanslick as a Jew.

The main burden of Wagner's 1850 pamphlet, aside from some disparaging comments mostly not worthy of attention here, is that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I demand two things from my cigarette.

I want a cigarette with low tar and nicotine.
But, I also want taste. That's why I smoke
Winston Lights. I get a lighter cigarette,
but I still get real taste. And real pleasure.
Only one cigarette gives me all that: Winston Lights.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

14 mg. "tar", 1.0 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report SEPT. '75

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

powerful interests, which he takes to be Jewish, are destroying German art. Much of his complaint is sheer anti-capitalism. . . . The chief ethnic charges against the Jews are that their mastery of German culture is superficial, and that there is a specific style of writing to which Jewish composers are given. Wagner cites especially Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, but it is notable that he does not accuse them of pedantry since this, and not anti-Semitism, is the theme of *Meistersinger*.

For example, in the first act, a roll-call of the assembled Mastersingers is presented, with emphasis on the Germanic names and a musical accompaniment which leaves no doubt about the composer's nationalistic intent. Beckmesser is included in the roll along with the others. . . .

Perhaps then it is something about Beckmesser's way of doing things that is the alleged Jewish parody. In *Das Judentum in der Musik* Wagner attacks the Jews for being wealthy and powerful. He attributes their rule to money, and believes that Jews will rule so long as money is the force before which all must yield. . . . It is worth noting at this point that Veit Pogner, not Sixtus Beckmesser, is the rich man in *Meistersinger*.

Wagner wrote in his pamphlet that because of the mistreatment and the isolation incurred by their own religion, Jews speak the language of the nation in which they dwell in an alien manner, and he insisted upon the existence of pronunciations peculiar to Jews speaking German. Granted that this is a trivial point, especially from an American viewpoint, but if Beckmesser is a Jew, why did Wagner not write a peculiar language for him, or direct that he speak with . . . a Jewish accent? . . .

Mr. Lipman declares that Wagner holds the Jew to be without culture of his own, which is not true even in the pamphlet on Judaism in which the Jew is represented as unable to absorb German culture *because* he has his own. He is unable to write good German music and instead creates a motley collection of various forms taken from all schools and ages. Compare this with Beckmesser's position as *Marker* or rule-keeper (critic if you like) of the school of the Nuremberg Mastersingers, whose single-minded adherence to a set of German rules is the background for the working out of the plot of the opera. . . .

Beckmesser, far from being a racial stereotype, is a musician of no mean order in Nuremberg and is no different from the other Mastersingers except that he has, to a greater extent than the others, the faults of a professor who thinks himself a poet. . . .

About Hans Sachs's great oration at the close of the opera, there is little to argue. It is the speech of an ardent German patriot, and if this is evil, then the speech is evil. It seems sometimes to be forgotten, however, that Richard Wagner died in 1883, before the modern world was born. . . .

In sum, I believe *Meistersinger* to be what it seems to be: a well-balanced presentation of Wagner's artistic theories. It concludes with high praise for the very German masters, including Beckmesser, who have plagued the young hero with their pedantry. Good German peddantry, Wagner seems to say, is the necessary basis of good German art, including his own. . . .

ESTEN DAVIS

Charlotte, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I have always been a Zionist and Jewish nationalist, and at the same time it has always been perfectly obvious to me that Wagner's operas were among the greatest works of art ever. There was never any use denying that the political, social, and religious program advocated in his operas, if not actually *ur*-Nazi, was at least consistent with the doctrines of National Socialism. There have been many attempts to reinterpret the operas in more universal terms, e.g., Donnington's brilliant Jungian analysis of the *Nibelungenring* or Shaw's cramped view of the *Ring* as an attack on capitalism. Whatever the partial truth of such ideas, there is no getting past the Teutonic particularism of Wagner's art. His Wotan is the god or conscious will of the Germans, not the almighty. His Sachs is out to save German art, not all art. His villains are all enemies of some aspect of the German spirit. The rule-ridden town clerk Beckmesser who steals German music, the dwarf Alberich who steals German gold and then wor-

An Unusually Charming Wedding Site

A limited number of especially elegant weddings may be scheduled at this gracious Hudson River Estate.*

R.S.V.P.

Ms. Elaine Van Alken
Tarrytown House
Executive Conference Center.
East Sunnyside Lane
Tarrytown, New York 10951
Phone: (914) LYric 1-8200
(212) WElls 3-1232

*Formerly the Mary Duke Biddle Estate.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The onshore impact of offshore oil.

Is the East Coast in for an Oil Boom?

Amoco representatives are traveling extensively to find out what the public in this area wants to know about offshore oil and natural gas exploration on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf.

We are talking to private citizens, state and local legislators, civic groups, sportsmen's and conservation groups and planning commissions. This is our first report on the important physical, ecological and economic subjects raised in these discussions.

It appears the major concern of East Coast residents is not with oil platforms fifty to one hundred miles offshore, well out of sight of land. Most people are confident that we have the technology to safely carry on an oil and natural gas exploration and production program.

There is a great concern, however, about the onshore impact of a major new industry upon the coastal communities. Many envision excessive onshore support installations and the influx of hundreds of workers which would put a strain on local facilities and services.

The fact is, even if major oil and natural gas reserves are discovered on the Outer Continental Shelf early in the exploration phase, seven to ten years would be required to bring a field into significant production. This will provide the time period necessary for the planned and gradual development of facilities and work forces in the coastal communities. There will be no sudden oil boom.

Exploratory drilling will be carried out by small, specialized crews. Later, if significant oil or gas deposits are found, the production phase should provide increased economic benefits primarily through increased income and payrolls of local suppliers to the industry. In many cases, existing terminals, storage tank farms and refineries will accommodate anticipated production.

Early exploration of the Outer Continental Shelf would establish whether there is oil and gas there. If there is, production could provide a domestic energy supply for Atlantic Coast communities and should benefit many sectors of the East Coast economy.

Watch for further reports probing the questions of onshore supply bases, pipeline landings, use of existing refineries and other issues raised by our readers.

Our job is you.

AMOCO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ships it, the Oriental magician Klingsor who steals the magic spear and seduces German youth away from Christianity, are all identifiable as Jews. Kundry, present at the crucifixion, is explicitly Jewish.

Mr. Lipman correctly points out the wonderful emphasis given by excellent artists, Jews as well, to words like *"was deutsch und echt, wusst' Keiner mehr, leb's nicht in deutscher Meister Ehr,'* " in spite of the ideas expressed. It's the art that does that; the spectacularly glorious music. No one can be unmoved by such art, no matter what god or devil it serves. In the opera house, Jew and Gentile alike exult in the triumph of "holy German art" against the false, foreign, empty . . . art of a Beckmesser. The music has that effect despite the fact that we know precisely what the words are really saying and how they were implemented by the Nazis. That exists in a different world.

How is it possible for a manifestly great work of art to serve a monstrous evil? . . . The liberal progressive view of things does not admit such a possibility. Art is supposed to be civilizing. We frequently even *define* civilization in terms of art. Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, *et al. are* to us classical Greek civilization, as Shakespeare and Co. *are* Elizabethan civilization. Art is even expected to promote morality. Aristotle says so. No doubt art can be educational, but it can also be murderous. It exists in its own world, with its own rules, beyond good and evil, peace and prosperity, justice or freedom. Nietzsche understood this; few others have learned. After all, it is perfectly possible to listen to Mozart and vote for Hitler. It's been done. There's no contradiction. . . .

Of course, Jews may resent the fact that Wagner was an *ur*-Nazi and made propaganda for our enemies, and that his evil propaganda is artistically glorious. I know this is hard to accept, but it's true. . . .

ALEXANDER FIRESTONE
Ames, Iowa

SAMUEL LIPMAN writes:

Though the specific points differ, all of these letters (with the honorable exception of Alexander Firestone's) present a common conception of *Meistersinger,* as "gentle, light-hearted, humanistic"; and accuse me of heinously violating it. This conception is of course the one which animated the production presented by the New York City Opera. The purpose of my article was not primarily to review the performances of individual members of the company, but rather to question that conception.

The picture of the opera put into practice by the City Opera seemed to me to show us a land of smiles, a whole world turning on love. To this, I opposed a conception of the opera as a masterpiece full of beauty and poison, of love and hatred, of truth and lies. The dark side of the opera I associated with the dark side of Wagner's genius; I identified the character of Beckmesser as being the repository of Wagner's greatest evil, his hatred of the Jews. This conception of mine is, I think, unacceptable to my critics for two sets of reasons: one set involves their particular stated objections to my argument, and the other—ultimately more interesting—involves their mostly unarticulated ideas about

See Europe on your way to Tel Aviv.

Israel is a long way off so it makes sense to make a stop on your way to Tel Aviv. And there's no better place to stop than in the heart of Europe—Frankfurt, Germany. You can rest, relax, shop, do a little business or rent a car and do some sightseeing in Europe's most beautiful scenery: the Rhine Valley, the Black Forest, the majestic Alps.

Lufthansa's fast comfortable jets leave from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles and Anchorage. If you prefer kosher meals, please order them when you make your reservation. Call your travel agent or Lufthansa German Airlines.

Lufthansa German Airlines

680 Fifth Avenue, 52 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019
Telephone: (212) 357-8400

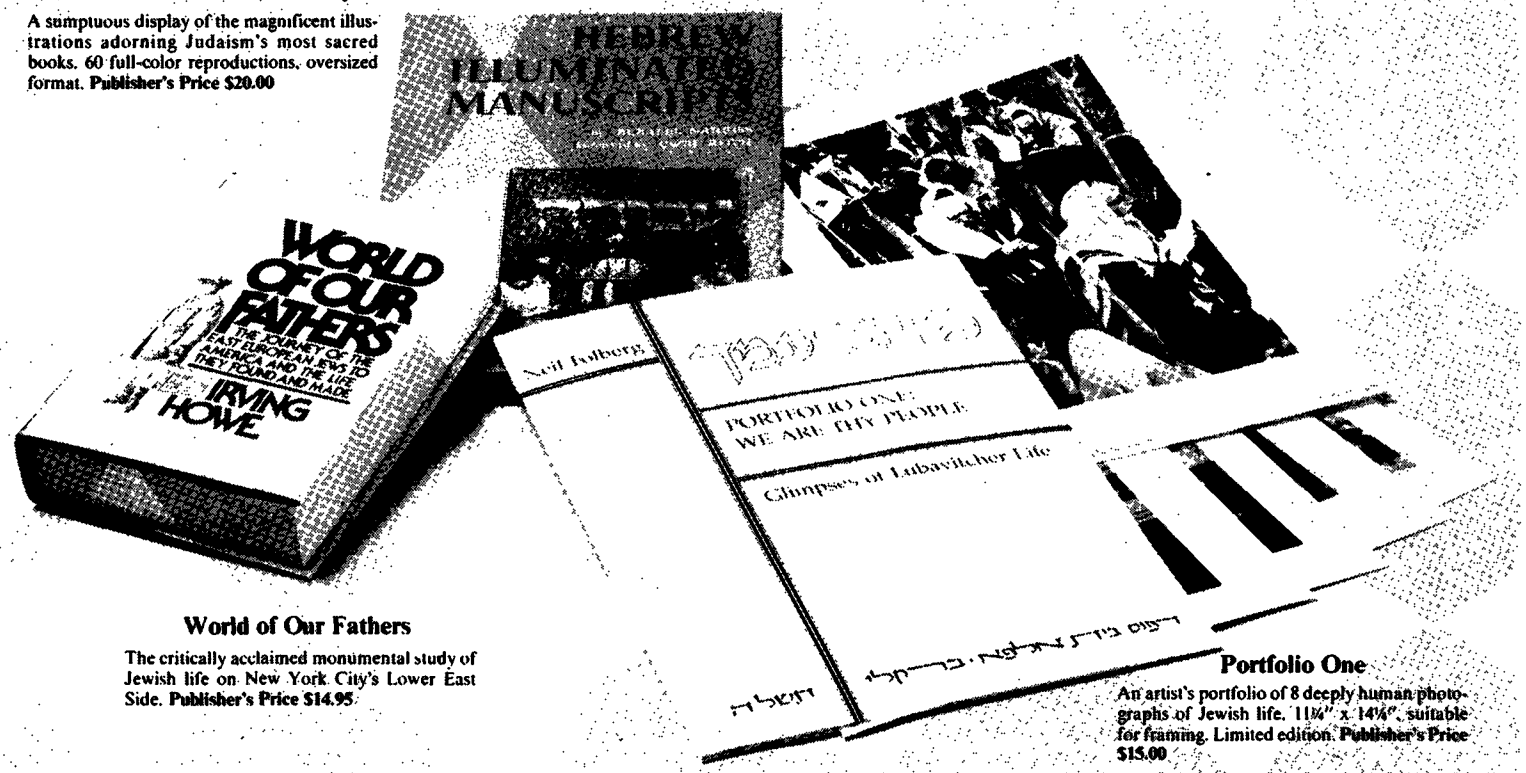
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TAKE ANY ONE FREE

WITH MEMBERSHIP IN THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB

Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts

A sumptuous display of the magnificent illustrations adorning Judaism's most sacred books. 60 full-color reproductions, oversized format. **Publisher's Price $20.00**


HEBREW ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS
WORLD OF OUR FATHERS
THE JOURNEY OF THE EAST EUROPEAN JEWS TO AMERICA AND THE LIFE THEY FOUND AND MADE
IRVING HOWE
Neil Folberg
PORTFOLIO ONE
WE ARE THY PEOPLE
Glimpses of Lubavitcher Life

World of Our Fathers

The critically acclaimed monumental study of Jewish life on New York City's Lower East Side. **Publisher's Price $14.95**

Portfolio One

An artist's portfolio of 8 deeply human photographs of Jewish life. 11¾" x 14¾", suitable for framing. Limited edition. **Publisher's Price $15.00**

SIX BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB

1. **Savings up to 50%:** On Jewish-interest reference, fiction, history, biography, archaeology, cooking, travel, religion, art, children's books, records, limited-edition etchings, unique deluxe gift editions.
2. **Quality editions:** All books are identical to the publishers' editions in content, format, size, and quality.
3. **Free Magazine:** The *Jewish Book News* provides lively reviews of books, art, and recordings of Jewish interest.
4. **A complete cultural service** for the Jewish family: You'll be able to keep abreast of the best and most important books of Jewish interest—many not available to the general public or stocked by local stores.
5. **Your minimum obligation:** As few as four selections the first year.
6. **A convenience and time-saver:** Home shopping & home delivery.

HOW THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB WORKS:
After your membership is accepted, you will begin receiving the *Jewish Book News*, a free publication sent to you thirteen times a year (about every four weeks). All selections and alternates will be described in advance in the magazine.
If you want the main selection featured in the magazine, do nothing and it will be sent to you automatically. If you want an alternate or no book at all, simply indicate your choice on the order form always enclosed with the *News* and return it to us so that we receive it by the date specified. This date is designed to allow you at least 10 days to decide whether you want the selection.
Membership guarantee: If your *News* is delayed in the mail and therefore you receive the main selection without having had ten days to notify us, you may return that selection at our expense.

The Jewish Book Club
165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

Please send me free
☐ World of Our Fathers
☐ Portfolio One (Choose One)
☐ Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts
and accept my application for membership in the Jewish Book Club. I agree to accept as few as 4 selections or alternates during the next 12 months at the special member's prices plus a small charge for postage and handling.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Signature_____

A Service of the American Jewish Committee

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the relationship between a work of art and its performers as well as its audience, and about the very nature of art itself.

The most easily dealt with of the stated objections is that I falsely accused Sachs of tricking Beckmesser into using Walther's song as his own. As the discussion in Ernest Newman's *The Wagner Operas* shows, it was very hard for Wagner to arrange that Beckmesser should want the song because he thought it to be Sachs's without Sachs becoming guilty of lying. After several false starts, Wagner solved the matter through the following exchange, which begins as Beckmesser produces the paper he has picked up while alone in Sachs's room, and which has Walther's song written on it in Sachs's handwriting:

BECKMESSER: Is this from your hand?
SACHS: Ah, is that why?
BECKMESSER: The writing's fresh.
SACHS: And the ink not yet dry.
BECKMESSER: Maybe, it's a biblical *song*?
SACHS: If that's your guess, your guess is wrong.
BECKMESSER: Well then?
SACHS: Well what?
BECKMESSER: You ask?
SACHS: Why not?
BECKMESSER: Despite your show of honesty,/you seem the greatest rascal to me.
SACHS: Perhaps, and yet I was never known/to take away what I don't own./And just so that no one might think you cheat,/The paper is yours, I give you the sheet.
BECKMESSER: Good lord, not that song? Not a song from you?/But wait,/I must watch for things I may rue/You've learned these words by heart, I will bet?
SACHS: Believe me, my friend, you *need not* fret.
BECKMESSER: You give me the sheet?
SACHS: Your honor to save.
BECKMESSER: To use as I like?
SACHS: Just as you crave.

Robert Gutman, in his now classic book on Wagner, has put the whole matter in a way which cannot be improved upon:

> Desiring the public to be aware of only the genial side of Sachs's complicated character Wagner, in the final act of *Meistersinger*, took pains to clear him technically of complicity in the ruin of Beckmesser. But legalistic sophistry remains sophistry nonetheless. Though Sachs is careful to convey to Beckmesser only the paper on which the prize song is written, this hairsplitting does not free him from guilt in a clear case of entrapment. Beckmesser's understandable assumption is that the freshly penned verses on Sachs's table in Sachs's handwriting are the work of Sachs. . . . If his victim had a lawyer's ear for words he would have realized he was being presented with only a piece of paper and not its content . . . even in glorious *Meistersinger*, morality rests upon the idea that any means justifies a Wagnerian end.

I have spent so much time on this rather simple matter because two of my readers, in raising it, show how unwilling they are to accept that Beckmesser is more than a figure of fun who gets minor punishment for his minor foibles. He is, to Wagner, a real villain who must be seen to deserve what is done to him.

IN 1882 A GROUP OF IDEALISTIC PIONEERS FOUNDED THE FIRST SETTLEMENT IN MODERN ISRAEL — RISHON-LE-ZION. EXPERTS DISPATCHED FROM FRANCE BY "THE BENEFACTOR", BARON EDMOND DE ROTHSCHILD, FOUND THE UNIQUE COMBINATION OF SUN AND SOIL EXCEPTIONALLY SUITABLE FOR WINE CULTIVATION. SINCE THEN CARMEL WINES HAVE SPREAD EVERYWHERE AND GAINED A FOREMOST POSITION AMONG THE BEST WINES OF THE WORLD.
CARMEL
CARMEL
CABERNET SAUVIGNON
IMPORTED
Shown, some of the actual gold medals awarded Carmel in International Wine competitions.

Enjoy Carmel...
A wine for every taste.
The prize-winning, praise winner.
Equalled by few, second to none.

IMPORTED BY CARMEL WINE COMPANY, N.Y., N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOT TASTE EXTINGUISHER

Come up to KOOL.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

©BAW T CO.

17 mg. "tar," 1.3 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette, FTC Report Nov. '75

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

All my critics accuse me of going beyond Wagner's actual words, of making *Meistersinger* into an anti-Semitic tract indistinguishable from Wagner's loathsome *Jewry in Music* (which one of my critics seeks, if not to defend, at least to mitigate). I did nothing of the kind; what I did say was that Wagner modeled Beckmesser on the supposedly Jewish Hanslick, and that Wagner filled out the resulting character with the traits he despised in the Jews. Beckmesser's proclaimed pedantry in the opera is the analogue to what Wagner saw as the Jews' reflective intellect, which has ceased to be animated by living feeling. These traits I mentioned in my article; here I would only like to add that far from Wagner writing, as one of my critics has stated, that the Jew is unable to absorb German culture *because* he has one of his own, he actually wrote:

> The Jew has never had an art of his own, so his life has never had any artistic side. Even today it offers to the seeker no universally human experience, but merely a peculiar method of expression . . . he listens only superficially to our music and its lifegiving organism. By this cursory listening he only discerns superficial similarities to the one thing he can understand, that which is peculiar to his own nature. So to him the accidental externals of our musical and artistic life must seem to be their essence; and when as artist he reflects them back to us, his creations necessarily appear to us strange, cold, peculiar, listless, unnatural, and distorted. Thus, the works of Jewish music often produce in us the kind of effect we would derive from hearing a poem by Goethe translated into that Jewish jargon we know as Yiddish.

I submit that this is what Wagner had in mind at the end of *Meistersinger*, with Walther substituted for Goethe. Beckmesser's prize-song performance is but Wagner's paragraph quoted above and translated by his genius into high art.

Of course Wagner did not, in point of fact, write Beckmesser's lines in Yiddish; of course he did not mention the word Jew in the opera. He did not need to, because he could take it for granted that the audience for which he wrote would unconsciously receive and react to the socio-political message conveyed by the symbol which Beckmesser so plainly was. The power of a symbol is not that it explicitly states its significance; its power stems from its ability to communicate on a level deeper than explicit meaning.

The point I have made above would hardly seem to be necessary, for we constantly read and construe great literature in this way. From Homer to Joyce, we see no harm and indeed a great deal of benefit in going beyond the characters and their words to find their symbolic meaning. And the same effort is made in Wagner; I need only mention the frequent interpretation of the *Ring* as Wagner's parable of 19th-century capitalism and its attendant misery—Wagner wrote against capitalism almost as much as he wrote against the Jews. But there is nothing in the *Ring* explicitly referring to the features of the economy Wagner knew. The stealer of the gold is named Alberich and not Krupp, and no one at all is named Bakunin. Had I myself in my article construed Sachs as Wagner's good father, Walther as an expression of Wagner's sexual strivings, and Eva as a symbol of art and Wagner's mother, my readers might have been bored, but they wouldn't have been upset.

I cannot escape thinking that this feeling of outrage at my finding an anti-Semitic message in the character of Beckmesser is quite special, and that they would be rather less upset had I discussed *Meistersinger* in terms of Marx or Freud. For Marx and Freud, each in his own way, are popular causes. Each represents some of the best hopes of progressive mankind. But the Jew—even to Jews—is not a popular cause. Many people—especially the intellectually sophisticated—would rather ignore such unpleasant matters.

We see this attitude in two of these letters; one correspondent writes: "The main burden of Wagner's 1850 pamphlet, *aside from some disparaging comments mostly not worthy of attention here* . . . [emphasis added]."

Another writes: "It is also very doubtful, against this background, whether Beckmesser is the vehicle for Wagner's anti-Semitic purposes as Mr. Lipman claims. *Whatever the case may be* . . . [emphasis added]." The message is clear: we can leave the Jews to politics, let's talk about art, dear art, and leave one unpleasant artist himself out.

Wagner would not have agreed. For him the man and the artist went together. He wrote in 1857, describing himself on the verge of the period in which he wrote not only his greatest theoretical aesthetic works, *Art and Revolution* (1849), *Art-work of the Future* (1850), *Opera and Drama* (1851), but also *Jewry in Music* (1850):

> I had entered on a new and decisive period of my artistic and human development, the period of conscious artistic evolution in an entirely new direction, which I had taken owing to an unconscious necessity and in which, both as man and artist, I am now advancing toward a new world.

Wagner was a Romantic artist. It was of the essence of the Romantic artist that his work was seen as the natural expression and fulfillment of his life. This started, in music, with Beethoven; it continued in Liszt; it acquired new meaning in Wagner. If we have no trouble seeing Beethoven the lover of freedom and mankind in his most abstruse string quartets, we should not unduly resist seeing Wagner the anti-Semite in some of his own work.

The question is, of course, having once seen the connection between an artist's life and opinions and his art, what use should we allow ourselves to make of the connection? Obviously what one must depend on here is inference and informed speculation, not apodictic demonstration. One does not, in attempting to divine the hidden and profound intentions of an artist, ever have the kind of evidence admissible in a court of law; one's purpose, however, is not to convict but rather, by use of the understanding, to present a round and rich account of a work of art. Often a performer or a critic has no choice but to go beyond hard evidence into a realm of hints, suggestions, and possibilities. To deny this process to those concerned with the communication of a work of art makes possible only literal readings which are, because of their shallowness, false. Exactly such a simplistic, literal reading of *Meistersinger* was responsible for the City Opera's inability to integrate all the music and words at the end of the opera. What they did not understand, they found irrelevant; what they found irrelevant, they cut.

What I said in my article about the presence of poison—both anti-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A SUPERB NINETEENTH-CENTURY MIZRACH NOW REPRODUCED FOR THE HOME

Limited edition, matted for framing, published at $15.00

"And they shall pray unto Thee toward their land which Thou gavest unto their fathers..." *I Kings 8:48*

In fulfillment of Solomon's words at the dedication of the first Temple, Jews throughout the world have traditionally turned toward Israel when they prayed. In Europe, the eastern wall of the synagogue came to be accorded special distinction (the Ark was placed there; the easternmost seats were reserved for honored members of the community), and most European synagogues were provided with an emblematic plaque bearing the words "mizrach" (Hebrew for "east") to identify the east wall. In time, the mizrach became a traditional feature of many private homes as well. Carved or painted mizrachs are among the most beautiful examples of Jewish art.

Now *Commentary* has had reproduced in a limited edition a mizrach of exceptional beauty and craftsmanship from the collection of the YIVO Institute of Jewish Research. Made in 1868 of the cut-out and colored paper of a complex Polish folk art, its stylized animals and interwoven foliage are extraordinary instances of a national craft being applied to Jewish religious tradition. The central panel of the original, approximately eight inches high, has been reproduced close to size and handsomely matted to 14 x 16½ for framing. The dark surrounding mat has been selected to complement the rich colors of the original and to lend itself equally well to modern or traditional framing.

The mizrach offers a good opportunity to enrich your home with an exceptionally decorative work having rich religious significance.

Commentary, 165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

Please send _____ matted mizrachs @ $15.00 each to:

_____
Name

_____
Address

_____
City, State, Zip code

☐ Payment of $_____ is enclosed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Semitic and nationalist—in *Meistersinger* does not add to Wagner's guilt for his political views; still less does it destroy *Meistersinger* as a supreme work of art. For what we must realize is that only because of the existence in the opera of what Wagner saw as evil—the loathsomeness of Beckmesser—was it possible for Wagner to create, and for us to appreciate, the sublime beauty of Sachs's renunciation and the happiness of the star-crossed young lovers. It is this opposition of good and evil which is the source of the dramatic richness of the work, the counterpart of its musical richness. This combined richness is the measure of Wagner's colossal musico-dramatic achievement in the opera, his perhaps greatest realization of the unity of word and tone.

That he achieved this miracle of art through investing a character with for him despicable Jewish traits is a tragedy for the Jews, and for humanity. But it is not a tragedy for art: art, whether we like it or not, is beyond good and evil. It is because art is fundamentally amoral that we must separate it from life. We must not do that by separating a work of art from its creator, we must do it by separating, as I suggested at the end of my article, the fantasies of the artist from the proper goals of social policy. To separate a work of art from its creator is to run the risk of falsifying the work of art; to fail to separate art from politics is to run the risk of murder.

Elias M. Schwarzbart has accused me of implicating a hundred years of Jewish artists, critics, and music-lovers in a conspiracy to hide the poison I say I have discovered in *Meistersinger*. What nonsense! I was not attacking any past performances; I plainly mentioned the Jewish Friedrich Schorr as the greatest Sachs. I *was* talking about the City Opera production and its sanitized approach. Indeed, I suspect that past performances were quite faithful to Wagner's intentions—all the more for being so unconsciously—because of their closeness in time to the creation of the opera. It is here now, in America, that we must discover through intellectual means what can no longer, due to time and distance, be supplied by tradition.

As for Julius Rudel's letter, its tone shows he is no more used to having his work examined seriously than he is to treating great art seriously. He interprets my article as being an attack not only on the opera but, even more important for him, on his company. If I was cautious in assigning blame in that I mentioned no names, it was because I did not know whom to blame; I had no way of knowing for sure who did what to whom. But as Mr. Rudel's letter makes abundantly clear, the responsibility is largely his. And so my comments must of necessity concern him, both as conductor and evident informing spirit of the production, and as Director of the New York City Opera.

His letter makes his approach to *Meistersinger* clear. Where I tried to discuss the problems of doing operas in English, he mentions Shakespeare, Keats, and Shelley; I am not aware that any of these three poets wrote operas. Where I discuss the implications of doing *Meistersinger* in English, he mentions the excellence of Porter, Gershwin, Hammerstein, and Sondheim. Where I find the interrelation of beauty and poison, he finds humanism, humor, and affecting warmth.

One point Mr. Rudel makes deserves attention. I objected to the cut at the end of the opera because, in addition to its elimination of dramatically necessary and musically valuable material, it was accomplished in a harmonically clumsy way. His justification of the cut as being acceptable because it only goes "from C major to C major" is misleading. For it is actually a cut which fails to resolve a C dominant seventh chord, which Wagner chose to resolve by a natural progression to F major. Mr. Rudel's cut, by going instead from the C dominant seventh chord to C major, leaves the seventh chord unresolved. The result may break no rule, but it sounds terribly clumsy. His concluding remarks on the subject—"We might even have left the section in if it didn't come so late in the opera and didn't seem so tedious at that point"—only show that his attiude seems to be a little more music, a little less, what's the difference?

His calling me a professional Jew, as odious as it is incomprehensible, only deserves to be printed, not answered. On one thing, I am glad to say, we come close to agreement: I said the City Opera presented a musical and he says that's the way he likes it.

Anti-Americanism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Since Henry Fairlie in "Anti-Americanism at Home and Abroad" [December 1975] quotes me, may I offer just one additional point to his article? This is that the American revisionist historians who charge that the United States and not Stalin and Molotov started the cold war have made little impression in Britain. The reason is simply that in 1945, and for a few years after, Britain (however unjustifiably) was still one of the Big Three, engaged in peacemaking and post-war policy; and the idea that Britain, at the side of the United States, was actively planning an anti-Soviet cold-war policy seems absurd. I can remember, after all, how British troops advancing from Italy to meet the Red Army in Austria tried eagerly to fraternize, only to be met with fixed bayonets; and I recall hearing tales from British officers acting as interpreters at the 1945 Potsdam Conference how, to their astonishment, they were met by absolute Soviet rigidity and icy hostility from the first preliminary conversations about the placing of the tables to the end of the conference.

T. R. FYVEL

London, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Henry Fairlie's excellent article on anti-Americanism mentions that the English have always been suspicious of foreigners because "after all, 'God is an Englishman.' . . . How else could one imagine God—as a Spaniard?" Amusingly enough, Emperor Charles V did just that: it seems he instructed his successor to learn four languages, among them Spanish, giving as a reason that "with God, one speaks Spanish."

ERWIN D. ADLER

New York City

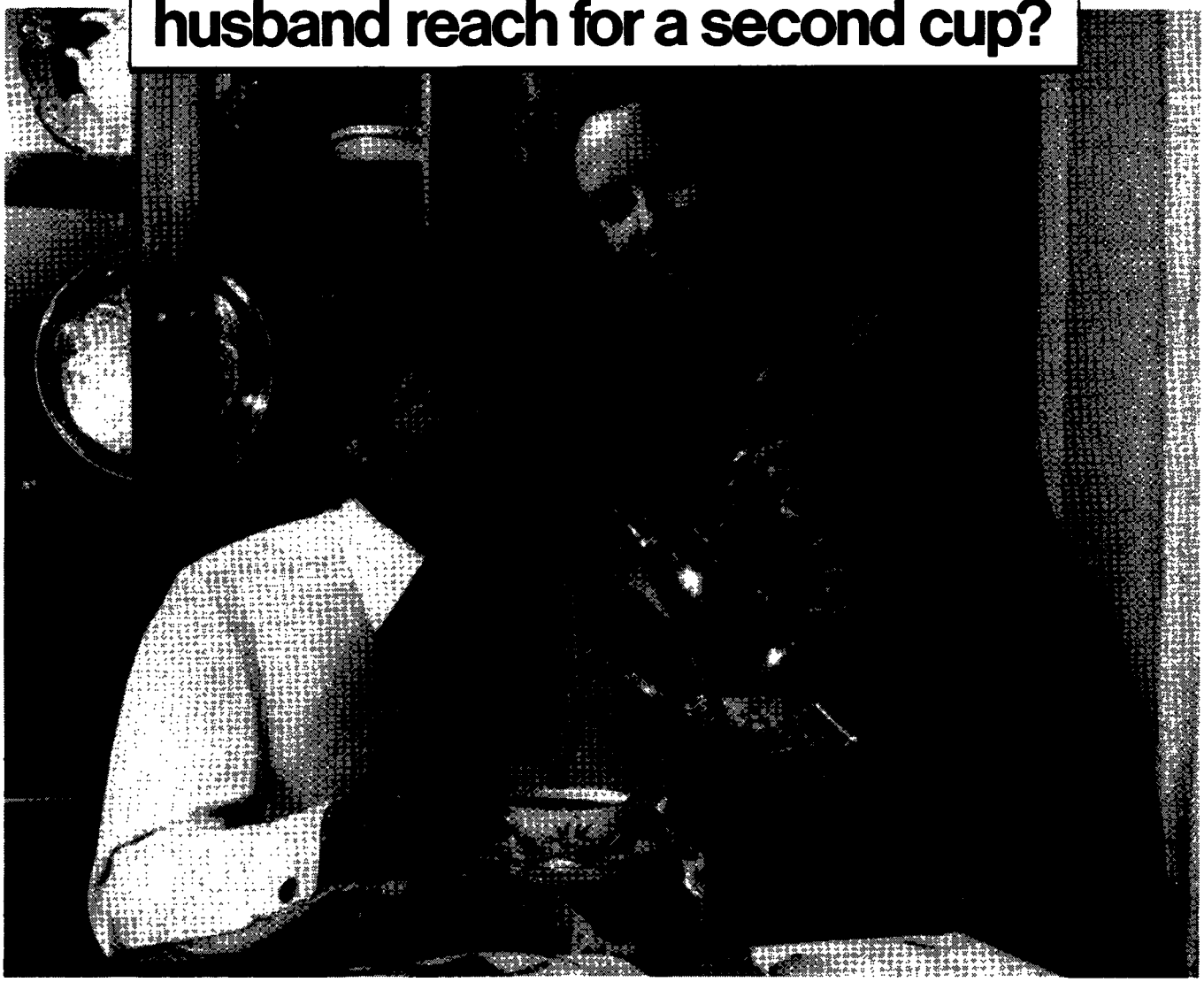
The Palestinians—Cont'd

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Astonished readers have called my attention to a supposed quotation from me in a letter in the March issue by Gary V. Smith (in a discussion of David Gutmann's article, "The Palestinian Myth," October 1975). I have no record or recollection of having written the passage attributed to me in a supposed publication called *Jerusalem*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wouldn't you like to see your husband reach for a second cup?



Then change to rich Yuban® -for richness worth a second cup.

I did. It used to bother me when my husband kept turning down a second cup. Because I'm too good a wife not to care about good coffee. So I changed to Yuban. It's extra rich taste comes from extra rich beans—like sun ripened beans from Colombia, some of the world's richest coffee beans. That's Yuban—for richness worth a second cup.

Yuban®
The Simcha Coffee

CERTIFIED KOSHER

The premium coffee of General Foods

GF
GENERAL FOODS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Embattled. The inflammatory passage described Jews using loudspeakers in the war of 1948 in Jerusalem, warning Arabs to flee the city "or you will all be killed."

I was not in Jerusalem during the war of 1948, but in Paris completing my documentary film, *The Illegals,* after having been expelled from Palestine by the British on arriving on a refugee ship. I have carefully searched my files and find no publication with the title *Jerusalem Embattled.* I reached Mr. Smith by telephone and he told me he had not directly seen such a publication but had taken his citation from an article by Erskine Childers in the London *Spectator* of May 12, 1961. Unfortunately my attention had not been called to that article until now, or I would have demanded verification before this.

This is not the first time my name has been used for a twisted presentation. Last year a neo-Nazi publication, widely noticed in England and asserting that "there were no six million Jews" murdered in the Holocaust, offered as evidence of this "hoax" a monstrous perversion of my relationship to the *Diary of Anne Frank* by asserting that the diary itself was a hoax because I had sued Otto Frank over the use of material in it which I was alleged to have written! The lawsuit, of course, was over the Broadway dramatization of the diary, which, a jury found, made considerable use of stage ideas from a previous dramatization written by myself. Indeed the basis of my contention was that the Broadway play had omitted important statements as to the meaning of the Holocaust, written by Anne Frank in her diary.

Coupling my name with the others cited by Mr. Smith tends to persuade readers that "even Meyer Levin" says so, and is injurious to me, but more important, propagandistic in intention. So far as I could ascertain by talking to Jews and Arabs after the 1948 war, there was at first a departure of Arab notables that surprised and even alarmed the Jews; this departure stimulated a larger outflow. Much can be attributed to war panic. Allegations from both sides about the stimulation of departure can be "proven" in the way that almost anything can be "proven" by isolated incidents and distorted accounts in the partisanship and disorder of war. I have never been unsympathetic to the Arabs, never ceased to hope for reasonable and peaceful solutions of our tragic situation, but I cannot condone the use of human lives, human misery protracted for propagandistic purposes, and the stimulation of terror and murder as a way of rule.

MEYER LEVIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In my letter in the March issue I quoted Meyer Levin from a book entitled *Jerusalem Embattled.* My source was Erskine Childers's "The Other Exodus" (*Spectator* [London] May 12, 1961, p. 673). A quick trip to the library uncovered that the author of the quotation was *Harry* Levin. The full title of the publication is *Jerusalem Embattled: A Diary of the City under Seige—March 25, 1948 to July 18, 1948.* It was published in 1950 in London by Gollancz. My apologies to Meyer Levin.

GARY V. SMITH
Montgomery, Alabama

The Third World

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Warmest thanks for publishing P. T. Bauer's learned and lucid "Western Guilt and Third World Poverty" [January]. Perhaps not since Daniel P. Moynihan's important essay the previous March ["The United States in Opposition"] on a related topic has a piece of magazine journalism carried so much raw *truth,* which term I intend in its older scholastic sense.

These are weird and frightening times. Some demon of self-loathing seems to have entered and possessed the soul of the West. Dark-skinned . . . children, either running with sores or supporting horribly distended bellies, stare out at us vacantly from (it seems like) every tenth page in both secular and religious publications and from countless TV documentaries. "You, you, you did this," their ravaged faces tell us.

Sensible and intelligent persons, including the searingly honest and/or deeply religious, have long suspected themselves to be under assault by some massive lie or delusion here. But thanks to our general lack of detailed information concerning the laws and history of economic growth, we have tended to be helpless against the force of this simplistic message concerning capitalism's natural *evilness* that Marxists and their uninformed or unstable collaborators in the media incessantly hammer at the public. Mr. Bauer, merely by clarifying things concerning extracted and earned incomes, has rendered fact-seekers a great service. In the course of his compendious essay, he does much more, ultimately supplying a firm footing from which we can take our real bearings.

BARBARA NAUER
Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

P. T. Bauer's article was for me, as a non-economist, a generally clear and convincing piece of reasoning. But not entirely. I find it difficult to understand how an essay dealing with Western guilt, the economics of colonialism, and large numbers of black countries could fail to discuss the matter of the slave trade. Had we the capacity to sort out causes of guilt with some finer degree of precision, my guess is that the background of slavery would loom much larger as an issue than would the fact that most of us eat too much in this country....

ROBERT PERMAN
Bethesda, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

P. T. Bauer's article rightly points out that foreign investment is not a simple "zero-sum" game—one player profits through another's losses—which is indeed comforting to citizens of capital-exporting nations.

But the central issue is ignored: bargains struck between unequals are unequal bargains. When a multinational corporation exports a dollar-a-day sweatshop abroad, or obtains a mining concession for a pittance, little or nothing trickles down to citizens of the host country, except for the few lucky natives who happen to be employed by the subsidiary.

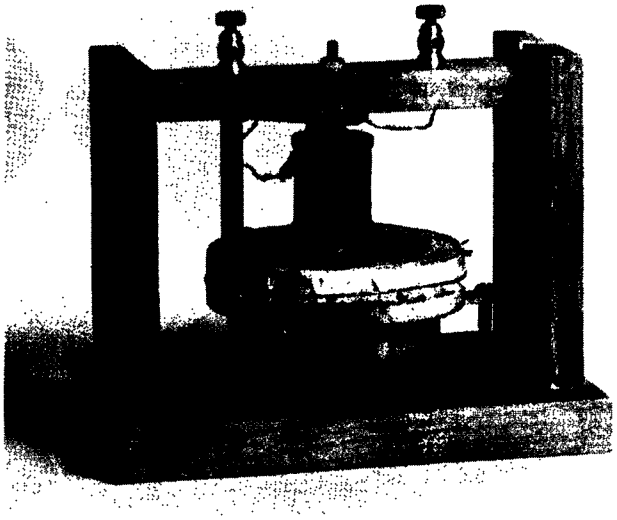
Instead of digging into the many facets of exploitation versus development, Mr. Bauer reserves his academic broadsides for those who mistakenly regard colonialism as mainly "exploitative." But the evidence he dredges up to support his case damages his position instead of strengthening it. For example, he repeatedly refers to African countries whose exports were increased through the efforts of European planters. Well, who owns the exports? Not the natives.... Worse still, Mr. Bauer's attempts to prove the benefits of "colonialism" force his foot into his mouth. For instance,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One of a series of reports on the first hundred years of the telephone.

Now that you've invented the telephone, Professor Bell, how can you make it so people can afford it?

Alexander Graham Bell's fingers were all thumbs in mechanical matters. He had a sensitive ear, an original mind, and a deep knowledge of speech and hearing. These assets enabled him to invent the telephone "mentally." But translating the concept into a working model required mechanical gifts he did not possess. And manufacturing telephones for use by the public posed still other problems.



Alexander Graham Bell's first telephone

To be fair, very few people had any experience fabricating electrical devices in 1873, when Bell began the investigations that led to the telephone. Samuel F.B. Morse's telegraph, invented in 1835, was the only important commercial use yet made of electricity. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology was only 14 years old. Thomas Edison's electric light was still some years in the future.

In the United States, some of the most concentrated work on new applications of electricity was being done in the workshop of Charles Williams, Jr. at 109 Court Street, Boston. Inventors including Edison took their ideas to Williams, who translated them into working models—or more often, into models that did not work.

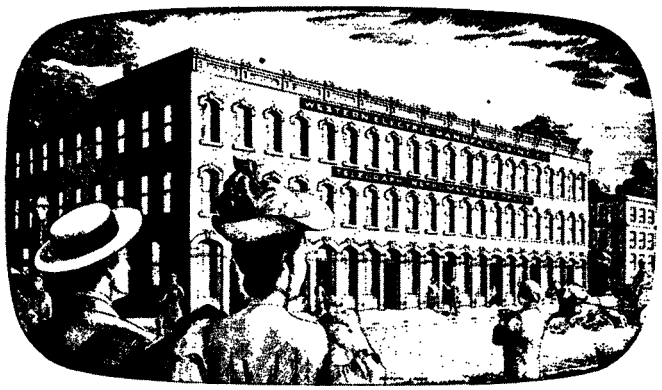
Thomas A. Watson

Bell sought Williams' aid in 1874. The helper assigned to him in January 1875 was Thomas A. Watson, aged 20. Bell was 27. The two complemented each other marvelously. Watson had his own sort of genius—for the practical business of putting together metal and wood and glass to form devices that would do what he wanted. The collaboration between the two men produced, on March 10, 1876, that famous first telephone call: "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you."

Bell foresaw a time when telephone service would link the cities of the world. But that required vast improvements in the telephone and in telephone connections. The newborn Bell Telephone Company set out to make those improvements. Watson hired two assistants, and began what would be called today a research and development

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

program. He made the experimental phone sturdier, and devised a hand-cranked magneto to ring a bell. Williams began manufacturing Watson's designs. The invention's financial backers organized telephone companies in various cities, raised additional capital, and hired a General Manager, Theodore N. Vail.



The Western Electric Manufacturing Co., Chicago 1881

By 1879 demand for telephones exceeded the capacity of Williams' shop. Manufacturers in Indianapolis, Cincinnati and Baltimore were licensed to make telephones under the Bell patents. More were needed. One company in Chicago had gained considerable expertise in making telegraph equipment. Years later, Watson reminisced, "When a piece of equipment built by Western Electric came into our shop...we always used to admire the superlative excellence of the workmanship." In 1881, Bell Telephone acquired a controlling interest in Western Electric, and in 1882 made that company the manufacturer of Bell equipment.

This arrangement was desirable for a number of reasons. Western Electric workmanship improved the quality of voice reproduction by telephone, a step essential to winning wide public acceptance of the new invention. It ensured reliability. When repairs were needed, standardized parts from Western Electric made for speedy restoration of service. A fourth advantage concerned the evolving nationwide network: a single manufacturer could see to it that telephone equipment throughout the country would work together compatibly, thus assuring the "interconnectedness" of the network—its capability of connecting any two phones.

The Engineering Department of Western Electric joined in the search for telephone improvements. Managers of local companies made suggestions based on day-to-day experience with customers. Outside inventors worked out refinements. Bell Telephone management weighed all the ideas, in terms of value to customers and practicality in manufacture. The best ideas were incorporated into the phones being made.

Organizational "feedback"—the subtle flow of engineering information and understanding within a technologically oriented enterprise—was a novel concept in those days. But the young telephone industry had already achieved a union of the successive stages of effort essential to the development of a coherent telephone system. Today Bell Laboratories is responsible for research and development. Western Electric looks for—and finds—better ways to make things. The 23 regional Bell companies provide telephone service and report back their needs and the needs of their customers. And American Telephone and Telegraph Company management provides overall coordination and guidance. Some of the names are different, but the functions had been established by 1882.

Vertical integration is one name economists give to this form of corporate organization. In a typical case, raw materials change to finished product with suc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cessive stages of manufacture integrated under one company. For example, a printing company might own paper mills and even its own forests. But there is a difference, because the Bell company was not, and is not, primarily a manufacturer of products. From the beginning, the partners in the enterprise—whether engaged in invention or manufacture or operations—sold telephone service, not telephone equipment.

For instance, there was the fundamental item of connecting the lines of two subscribers who wanted to talk. This was handled in central offices by a corps of operators, using cords, plugs and jacks. Setting up a call could take as long as seven minutes. In 1884, Ezra T. Gilliland, working for the Bell company, devised a mechanical system that would allow a subscriber to reach up to 15 lines without the help of an operator. In 1891, Almon B. Strowger, a Kansas City undertaker, patented a dial machine constructed in a round collar box. It connected up to 99 lines. But the big city offices already handled thousands of lines, and the numbers were growing rapidly. The connection problem was growing much more rapidly, because of some basic geometry: it takes one line to interconnect two telephones, three lines for three telephones, six lines for four, 28 lines for eight, and 4,851 lines for 99 telephones. In connections, added telephones were just the opposite of "cheaper by the dozen."

The Bell company set out to develop a machine that would connect any of 10,000 telephones—49,995,000 possible connections. The search was costly, but necessary for continued good service, and the various parts of the company joined to pursue it to a successful conclusion. (Today in the United States a telephone can be connected to any of 140 million others. There are 10 quadrillion—10 million billion—possible connections.)

Young men manually connecting phone calls in 1879

There was also the problem of financing the nationwide conversion of central offices to dial. Service improvements on the scale required are enormously expensive—so expensive as to be impossible without the most careful attention to economy. Here again the integrated corporate structure shows its values. Western Electric, because its prime objective is to benefit telephone service, has become a world champion in cost control, and a pacesetter in the improvement of productivity. Data issued by the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics show that overall the productivity of the telephone industry has increased by 50% since 1965. That is two and a half times the productivity increase in the United States economy as a whole.

Savings of that sort continue, as a recent example shows. Bell scientists, building on the semiconductor research that helped them invent the transistor, also aided in the development of the light-emitting diode or LED. These solid-state lamps, now familiar as displays in pocket calculators and watches, can replace incandescent lamps in many pieces of telephone

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

equipment. They will last the lifetime of the phone, operate with much less electrical power, and help hold down the cost of installation and maintenance. Over the next five years, LEDs should save the Bell System about $120 million. Bell Labs semiconductor research also resulted in the invention of another solid-state light source, the tiny semiconductor laser.

Future uses of these solid-state light sources may be even more important than today's. They will almost certainly be used

For the nation's future communications needs, Bell engineers are today developing systems to transmit telephone calls on lightwaves.

in systems transmitting telephone calls and other communications over lightwaves. Lightwave communications could mean an enormous increase in the capacity of the phone network, making it possible to meet the need for increased call volumes and new communications services economically in the years ahead. And to do it while conserving energy and scarce raw materials.

Innovation, productivity, advance planning—all mean improved service and reasonable costs. And in the telephone industry, cost savings benefit not only shareholders; they are passed along to the public as well.

In the decade 1965-1975, the cost of living rose 74%. Telephone rates for local service went up only 40%. And interstate long distance rates went up about 4%. Now 95% of all American homes have telephones. The quality of the service is the envy of the world.

Numerous studies have been made of the role of the Bell organizational structure in achieving those results. One of the most recent, concluded in 1974, was made by the independent auditing and management consulting firm of Touche, Ross & Co., acting as consultants for the staff of the Federal Communications Commission. According to their report:

"Western Electric's efficient performance has resulted in lower costs than otherwise would have been incurred. Because of Western's pricing policies and practices, these lower costs have not increased profits, but have been passed on to operating companies in the form of lower prices...The effect of the interrelationship between Bell and Western Electric is to operate Western, not as a manufacturing concern, but as an integral part of a vertically integrated communications firm. These interrelationships result in a favorable impact upon Western's costs, prices and service to operating companies."

The best telephone service in the world didn't just happen. It was planned that way.

One Bell System. It works.

Bell System

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he observes: "Some of the richest countries were formerly colonies and even as colonies were already prosperous (North America, Australasia)." Yes, the colonialists did well, no doubt about it. But what happened to the Aborigines, the American Indians, the Bantu, the Congolese, and the native Asians?

If it were not for Mr. Bauer's association with the London School of Economics, and his having written several books on Third World problems, I might let myself believe that his article is a deliberate whitewash—an informal, unofficial White Paper—for British colonialism and European colonialism in general. After all, he has chosen to ignore some rather seamy happenings, not the least of which was the Belgian solution to the Congolese population explosion: exterminating more than half the population. But I'd rather believe that Mr. Bauer leaned over backward in his attempt to quiet moral and ethical anxieties among Western liberals, stricken by the current "atonement" fad. . . .

FRANK WALKE

New York City

P. T. BAUER writes:

I wish to thank Barbara Nauer for her thoughtful observations. Robert Perman has overlooked my brief discussion of the effects of the slave trade in which I explain why they are largely irrelevant to Third World poverty.

[*In the author's note accompanying Mr. Bauer's article, the title of one of his recent books was inadvertently omitted. It is* Dissent on Development: Studies and Debates in Development Economics *(Harvard, 1972).*—ED.]

"Swept Away" . . .

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When William S. Pechter ["Watching Lina Wertmuller," Movies, January] did not like Lina Wertmuller's *Swept Away* and felt uncomfortable about such a film being made by one woman and hailed by others, he might have lingered in his puzzlement. The film I saw was about the prolonged feeling of helplessness and puzzlement, in men and women, about how one faces paradox and resists tyranny. The experience of trying to find the small limits of one's power under conditions of oppression has been documented by people in the Resistance during World War II, by people in "Iron Curtain" countries today, and begins to be documented by women as their primary experience of the world. In this view, *everything* is political. Labels are unimportant; intellectual allegiances do not weigh; the range of vision is skewed constantly by the question, for or against? Life is an unremitting test: what degree of subversion and/or honesty can be introduced into the situation without finding oneself annihilated?

If one is poor or weak and one fights all the time in invisible ways, the dream is of giving in and getting it over with. *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* and *Do With Me What You Will* are titles of novels that deal with this situation and catch the fantasy—as does *A Woman Called Solitude*. The fantasy of submission is neither as obsessive as the resistance to tyranny, nor is it entirely feminine and focused. Rape is only one of its forms. In the movie, the male lead is shown to be as terrified of submission, intoxication, loss of control as the female. . . .

The first twenty minutes of the film hone in on the bottomless, paradoxical, and cruelly imperious *misery* of the female lead. She says she hates the hypocrisy of wealthy Communists, but her talk expresses human longing without hope. Where can such longing go in modern life—for men and for women, for rich and for poor? Rich men sleep a lot, own private yachts, and funnel dreams into worldly domination, ideological abstraction, and vacation. Unlike Lady Chatterley the new rich woman, marooned in wealth, gender, and functionlessness, cannot even imagine salvation through sex. Be it overcooked spaghetti or hypocrisy, whatever exists, she criticizes. Unlike her North Italian prototype (Shakespeare's Kate), she cannot even protest that the *last* thing she wants is a man. She wants nothing, an objectless condition her privilege contains. She can only want that things not be as claustrophobic as they are, and the claustrophobia of the luxury yacht is heavily filmed. . . .

Cut down to wilderness-survival, the film bears amusing cross-cultural comparison with *Deliverance*: the absence of woman in *that* wilderness, the uses of gentleness and justice. Here the man knows his yearnings to dominate, while the woman has been corroded by her critical view of the world. All she has is resistance, the desire not to give in, the reduced center of integrity of all long-powerless people. So *he* dominates and is brutal, Calibanesque, lords it over her, and rapes her (Shakespeare provided a near-rape). Then, in opposition to *Clarissa, The Story of O, Deliverance,* in which savage titillation tends only toward further violence, we are asked to submit to a new sensation. When the man takes the woman's earrings, we are invited to wonder about politics as symbiosis rather than domination-subordination. The man gets there sooner than the woman, is there already when the woman asks him to sodomize her. Offended by her use of big words, he protests that he does not feel as if he is violating her and she submitting to another perversion. What are the beauties of symbiosis and what are its flaws? How long can it go on?—only on an island, in the most impossible Prospero's isle imaginable. And *why* is the woman so happy? . . .

Circulating in Princeton, New Jersey is a novel manuscript by Cynthia Gooding. . . . The novel's location is Seville, the main character is a sixty-eight-year-old woman, part-Negro in blood, deeply Negro in identification. Her fantasy is of total yielding to her white lover, discovering the experience of her female ancestors at the hands of white slaveowners. For forty years, she has avoided yielding, because she fears that if she submits, she will become capable of torture, murder, and maiming. The novel suggests that the longing to come out of the cold has very little to do with rape and very much to do with feelings of profound ambivalence about savagery. . . .

Swept Away is a milestone in exploring optimistically, briefly, life after the yielding. The beauty of the lyrical duets comes from having given in and found that rather than becoming more savage, both man and woman are gentled. . . .

Because of the charge of male arrogance in traditional Jewish culture, Jewish male intellectuals are in a particularly vulnerable position when faced with works of art and cries for justice offered by women. If puzzled, their stance of puzzlement becomes more important than their capacity for cleverness. Many men I know felt uncomfortable watching and being asked to sympathize with the man in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Swept Away. They did not assume that Lina Wertmuller was putting thumbs in suspenders and showing that she too could play a porn, chauvinist number. We sat together, they and I, and wondered. We are asking Mr. Pechter to try as carefully as we do, in our discomfort, to see what he watches.

E. A. SOCOLOW
Princeton, New Jersey

WILLIAM S. PECHTER writes:

E. A. Socolow is quite right in thinking I didn't like *Swept Away*, and quite wrong in thinking the fact that it was made by one woman and hailed by others made me feel the least bit "uncomfortable" ("disgusted" would be more like it); and I invite her not to invite me to join her and her enlightened male friends in lofty acts of consciousness-raising. Whether Miss Socolow is right or wrong in her flight of free association on the film itself, I leave it to readers to judge without my succumbing to any further temptation to draw on the vast reserves of my capacity for cleverness.

Dos Passos

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Epstein ["The Riddle of Dos Passos," Fiction, January] has not done his homework and is therefore less than fair when he juxtaposes two widely separated-in-time and apparently contradictory judgments of Edmund Wilson on Dos Passos which demonstrate, according to Mr. Epstein, that "politics can affect literary judgments even retroactively." Mr. Epstein would have us believe that Edmund Wilson radically changed his literary assessment of Dos Passos for purely political reasons. This is simply not the case, as any interested reader can learn for himself by going through the references to Dos Passos in Wilson's *The Shores of Light: A Literary Chronicle of the Twenties and Thirties*. Mr. Epstein quotes only the final approving sentence of Wilson's review of Dos Passos's *The 42nd Parallel* (reprinted in *The Shores of Light*). Had Mr. Epstein in addition skimmed the pages of *The Shores of Light*, he would have found many disparaging comments on Dos Passos's political beliefs and literary talent. For example: "Dos Passos is ridden by adolescent resentments and seems given to documenting life from the outside rather than knowing it by intimate experience . . . he is far too much addicted to making out cases against society" (1926). Or: "Eliot's classicism, royalism, and Anglo-Catholicism, from the notion I get of them in his recent writings, seem to me as much academic attitudes, as much lacking in plausibility, as Dos Passos's cult of the class-conscious proletariat . . ." (1930). Even in the favorable review of *The 42nd Parallel* from which Mr. Epstein quotes, . . . Wilson has his reservations about Dos Passos: "He [Dos Passos] still has moments of allowing his people to contract into two-dimensional caricatures of qualities or forces he hates. . . ."

It is clear, then, that there is nothing inconsistent in Wilson's finding Dos Passos's conservative beliefs of the 60's as "puerile" as his former radical convictions. Though Wilson and Dos Passos were friends and more or less political allies in the 20's and 30's (the friendship endured until the early 60's, as we know from the recently published book by John P. Diggins, *Up From Communism*), Wilson was always critical (as he was with other writer-friends) and characteristically independent of fashionable or trendy attitudes. Edmund Wilson sometimes started trends, he never followed them, and he never hesitated even in the 50's to praise novelists like Dreiser or Sinclair Lewis who were out of fashion. Even Wilson's literary lapses, his dislike of Kafka and Baudelaire, and his refusal to concern himself with contemporary American literature (to which Saul Bellow has recently objected, though Wilson did praise Bellow's *Dangling Man* when it appeared) are part of his lifelong effort to see things with his own eyes. We do not go to our greatest man of letters for reflections on politics, but a sentence from Wilson's essay on Flaubert is worth pondering: "Nothing exasperated him [Flaubert] more—and we may sympathize with him today—than the idea that the soul is to be saved by the profession of correct political opinions." . . .

Mr. Epstein is generous in his response to Dos Passos's greatest achievement, *U.S.A.*, but I wish that he had not found it necessary to say, "*U.S.A.* is a young man's novel—written by a then young Dos Passos and best read when young." I haven't reread the novel since my own twenties, but my memories of it are so warm and glowing (as are Mr. Epstein's) that I cannot help but feel that "young man's novel" is an unconscious put-down, the kind of remark one might make about Thomas Wolfe. After all, novels like *War and Peace, The Brothers Karamazov, The Thibaults, The Magic Mountain, Kim,* and *Huckleberry Finn* are also young men's novels. They are old men's novels, too. . . .

GEORGE SIEGEL
University of Massachusetts
Boston, Massachusetts

JOSEPH EPSTEIN writes:

Where does George Siegel think that I learned about Edmund Wilson's earlier estimate of John Dos Passos if not in *The Shores of Light*? True, Wilson had reservations, but by and large he was willing to forgo them in his final judgment about *The 42nd Parallel*, which I quoted in my essay.

Mr. Siegel is obviously a great admirer of Edmund Wilson's work. So am I. I think Edmund Wilson the best literary critic in the history of our nation, and have said so, in print, on more than one occasion. But he was not infallible. Politically, I think he had a quite commonplace mind; his politics were of the variety known as literary-man's leftism, and are on display at their most naive in his *The Cold War and the Income Tax*. Since Mr. Siegel drags Saul Bellow's name into his letter, perhaps it will help to underscore my point about Wilson's politics to say that, while it is true that he praised Bellow's *Dangling Man*, he did so by citing it as a fine anti-war novel—". . . an excellent document on the experience of the non-combatant in time of war"—which is perhaps the last thing it is.

Finally, I did not intend my assertion that Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* "is a young man's novel" as a put-down, consciously or unconsciously, though I do grant that it is the kind of remark that one might make about Thomas Wolfe's novels. But to apply the remark to the other novels Mr. Siegel mentions does not seem very intelligent—it seems, in fact, silly. My point was the simple one that *U.S.A.* seems to me a novel best read when one is young. As certain books get better as one gets older, so other books that one read and loved when one was young are probably best not reread later in life. Having reread *U.S.A.* recently, I am sorry to have to say that I found it to be a book of the latter kind.

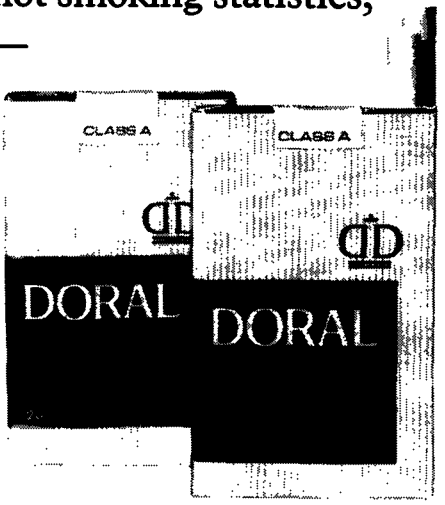
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"How I lost 1200 mg. of 'tar' the first week... without losing out on taste."

©1976 R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.

"Personally, there's not a big difference to me in the taste of Doral and my old brand. They are both good smokes. But Doral is 6 milligrams lower in 'tar.'

"That's 120 mg. less 'tar' a pack. I go through about a carton a week—so it adds up to about 1200 mg. less 'tar' on this 'Doral Diet.' Best of all, I'm not smoking statistics, but Doral—a good tasting cigarette."

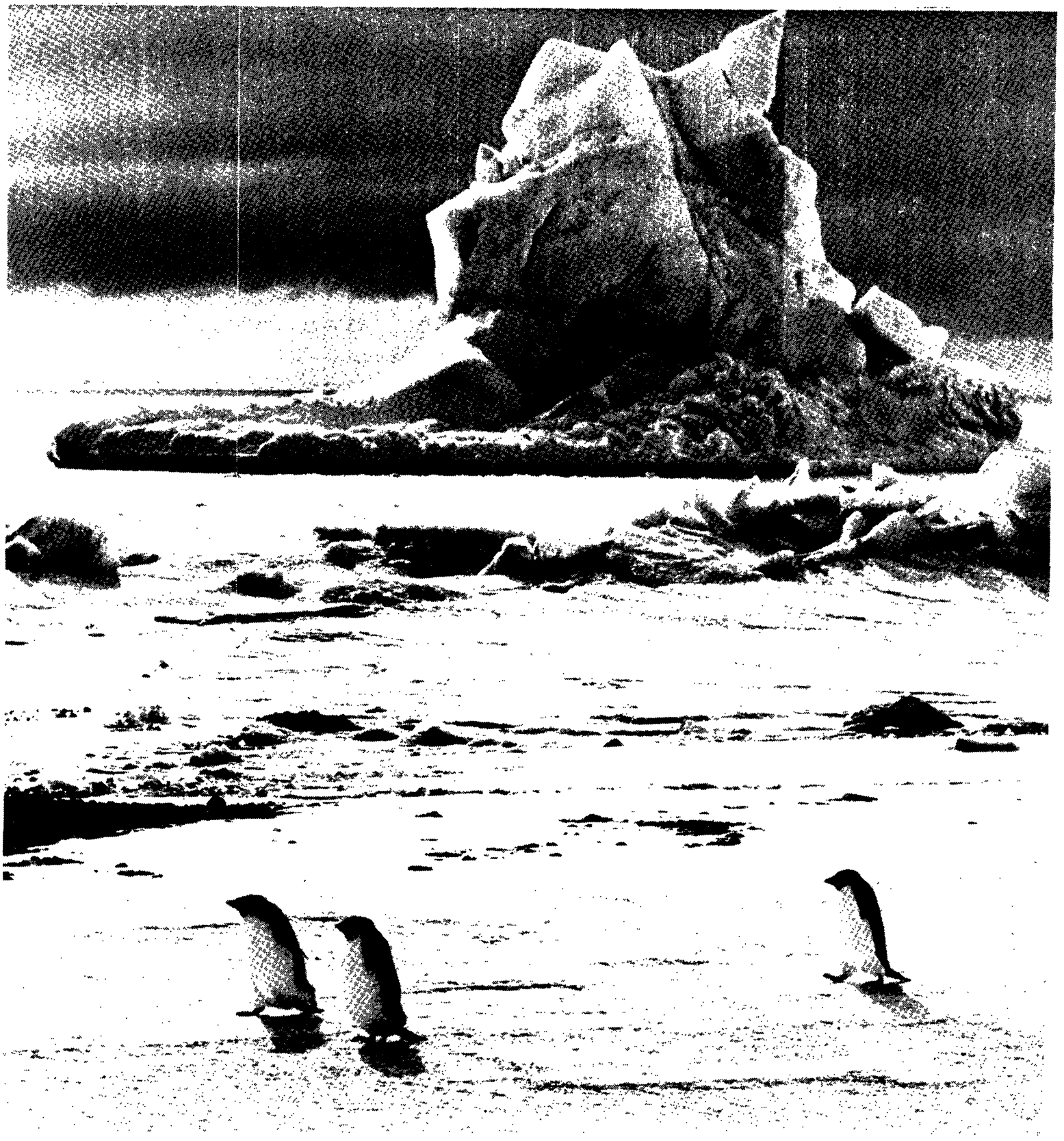


Menthol or Regular.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

MENTHOL: 13 mg. "tar", 1.0 mg. nicotine,
FILTER: 14 mg. "tar", 1.0 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette, FTC Report SEPT. '75.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



It's easier to remember where we don't go.

Our apologies to the Antarctica Tourist Board.

For despite the fact we have the world's largest fleet of 747s.

And despite the fact we have 28,000 people who've made a profession out of taking Americans to foreign lands.

And despite the fact we have a route structure that takes in 98 cities in 65 countries.

There's still one continent we don't fly to.

Of course, tastes may change radically.

In which case, we'll open Antarctica to air travel.

Even as we opened every other continent.

And take the apology back and start taking tourists.

PAN AM

America's airline to the world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

See your travel agent

Making the World Safe for Communism

Norman Podhoretz

At the height of the opposition to the Vietnam war, government officials frequently warned that should the American effort be defeated there, the result would be a right-wing backlash at home and a lapse into isolationism. Obviously the right-wing backlash never materialized, but just as obviously an isolationist mood *has* taken hold of the country since we left Vietnam. Not that this latter phenomenon is obvious to everyone. Isolationism has for so long been a dirty word in the American political vocabulary that the ideas and sentiments it describes have been forced to travel under different colors. Isolationists, in short, are unlikely to call themselves isolationists nowadays and will almost certainly bristle with indignation if anyone else calls them by that name. But if we were to forgo the use of this term, we would make it harder to understand the implications of a point of view which more and more people are being persuaded to adopt, sometimes without full awareness of what it is they are committing themselves to. It is therefore necessary to the clarification of public discourse, not to mention certain other and even more important objectives, that the word isolationism be retained.

There are and always have been several varieties of isolationism, but they all have a common core which can be summarized quite simply in the proposition that the United States should never go to war for any purpose other than the defense of its own territory against attack.* But if we are to understand the special force of the isolationist proposition today, we must bear in mind that it addresses itself to an America which for the past twenty-five years has played an interventionist role unprecedented for this country in range, in depth, and in seriousness. In the period after World War II the United States undertook an obligation to check the spread of Communist power and influence everywhere in the world—by political means where possible and by military means where necessary. Playing this role involved an incredible number of "entangling alliances" which did indeed, just as George Washington warned they would, drag us into foreign wars—two of them, and in far-away places of which (as it could much more truly have been said than it was by Neville Chamberlain of England's relation to Czechoslovakia in the 1930's) we knew nothing, and less than nothing. It is in opposition to this role that isolationism defines itself today. The general isolationist view is still, as it has always been, that the United States has no business going to war for any reason other than the defense of its own territory against attack. But translated into the particularities of world affairs today, isolationism amounts to saying that the United States should no longer do anything to check the spread of Communist power and influence anywhere in the world.

As recently as a few months ago, this definition would have been dismissed in certain quarters as applying to only a few marginal extremists. No "serious" or "responsible" person, one would have been told, and certainly no one in authority, holds such exaggerated views. But after the almost universal opposition to American intervention of any kind in Portugal at a time when a Communist minority was threatening to take over that country; after the overwhelmingly negative congressional response to any form of financial or military aid to the anti-Communist forces in Angola at a time when the Soviet Union was pouring in many millions of dollars and more than ten-thousand Cuban proxies to support a "Marxist" faction there; after the outcry which greeted the revelation that the CIA has spent a few million dollars to help anti-Communist politicians in Italy at a moment when the Italian Communist party is on the point of acquiring a significant share of power within the national government—after all this, how else is one to characterize the views of very

Norman Podhoretz is the editor of Commentary and the author of two books, *Doings and Undoings* and *Making It*. The views he expresses in this article are his own.

* This does not imply that the United States should refuse to enter into commercial relations with other countries. On the contrary, to one variant of the isolationist position, among the worst things about "entangling alliances" is that they tend to be bad for business by cutting off foreign markets which might otherwise be profitable. For example, the farmers of the Midwest, who have traditionally been notorious for their political isolationism (and anti-Communism), are today one of the most enthusiastic centers of support for trading with the Soviet Union. For this reason the term isolationism may well be misleading, suggesting as it does the severing of all connections with the rest of the world. "Neutralism" might be more precise, though it would probably be just as unacceptable as "isolationism" to present-day holders of these views.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

large numbers of "serious" and "responsible" people in this country? No doubt many such people *think* they believe there are things the United States should do to check the spread of Communist power and influence in the world. But what? It goes without saying that the circumstances under which American military action for these purposes would be approved by such people are by now impossible to imagine. But it is even becoming difficult to imagine any political and economic measures far short of war or the threat of war which they would recommend or support to contain the spread of Communism.

It would be a great mistake to assume that these people, the new isolationists, are all liberals (or what is nowadays called liberals). Many, or even most, so-called liberals today are indeed isolationists, but so are many "conservatives." For just as a bi-partisan consensus in support of anti-Communist interventionism developed in this country after World War II, we are now witnessing the emergence of a consensus in support of the new isolationism which cuts across party lines and unites a wide variety of otherwise divergent ideological groupings.

It is nevertheless true that the new isolationism is for the moment most visible among liberals. This is itself a measure of the enormous change which has taken place in the political culture of the country, for only yesterday it was interventionism which was most visible among American liberals. There is of course an old tradition of liberal isolationism which was still very influential as recently as the late 1930's when the *New Republic*, the leading liberal magazine of the day, opposed American entry into World War II. But by then the prevailing winds of liberal sentiment were already blowing so powerfully in the other direction that it is fair to describe the liberals of that period as *the* party of intervention.

To be sure, World War II was a war against Hitler and fascism, and it was fought in alliance with the Soviet Union—a combination which made the case against isolationism and in favor of interventionism irresistible to all shadings of liberal opinion. The case for an interventionist policy aimed against the Soviet Union after the war, however, was less compelling to liberal opinion. Indeed there was a split among liberals on the issue. But the pro-Soviet element (made up for the most part of Communists who had in the days of the Popular Front of the mid-1930's taken to calling themselves liberals—"liberals in a hurry"—and their fellow-travelers) turned out to be very weak. The pathetic showing of their presidential candidate, Henry Wallace, against Harry Truman, the candidate of the anti-Communist liberals, in 1948 crippled them as an effective force, and McCarthyism then moved in to administer the *coup de grâce*.

By "McCarthyism" here I am referring to more than a demagogic technique of accusation or to the activities of Senator Joseph McCarthy himself; I mean the entire range of public and private harassment of Communists and their sympathizers, real and alleged, inside the government and out. Contrary to the liberal mythology of today, Communists and fellow-travelers *had* moved into the State Department (and other agencies of government) during the Roosevelt administration; and while very few of them were actually engaged in espionage or committed acts of treason, they could hardly have been expected to work enthusiastically for an anti-Communist foreign policy. On the other hand, despite an occasional spectacular case like Alger Hiss, Communist influence within the government itself was never so great as to pose a serious threat to the carrying out of policy, which leads one to speculate that purging the government of Communist sympathizers was not the main purpose of McCarthyism. In any event, whatever its conscious intent may have been, its main effect—and the reason in all probability it was tolerated for so long by both major parties—was to bring home the Communist threat, to make it domestic, in order to mobilize popular support for a policy of fighting Communism abroad. McCarthyism was a way, in other words, of transforming what might have seemed a remote abstraction into a clear and present danger, so that sending money to Europe or sending troops to Korea could be represented as necessary measures of self-defense against a danger which had already moved inside the gates and even, as it were, under every bed.

Liberals of all shades of opinion deplored and denounced McCarthyism, but the anti-Communists among them were even less sympathetic than the McCarthyites to the kind of liberalism that was either unambiguously pro-Soviet or that was "soft" on Communism. These anti-Communist liberals were themselves waging an ideological war against the Stalinoid influence within their own political ranks—a war so successful that by 1960 their candidate for the Presidency, John F. Kennedy, running against Richard Nixon, a man who had literally built his career on anti-Communist fervor, was able to charge the Eisenhower administration, a conservative Republican administration and one in which John Foster Dulles himself had been Secretary of State, with laxity in responding to the Communist threat.

As surely, then, as liberals had been *the* party of intervention in the fight against fascism, liberals became the preeminent party of intervention in the fight against Communism. It is true that the anti-Communist rhetoric of the conservatives was more strident than that of the liberals. The conservatives tended to speak of Communism as "absolute evil," and they held out hopes of a "roll-back" of Soviet power in Eastern Europe and of "unleashing" Chiang Kai-shek against the mainland, whereas the liberals spoke more mildly of containing Soviet expansionism and of winning

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the hearts and minds of what was still being called the "underdeveloped world." In practice, however, the liberals tended to be more aggressive than the conservatives in the use of American power, whether political, economic, or military. While liberals and conservatives agreed that the positive objective of an anti-Communist foreign policy was to defend the "free world" against the threat of totalitarianism, it was primarily the liberals who pressed for political and economic initiatives to encourage democratic reforms and the development of free institutions in all those countries which were part of the free world only, or anyway largely, in the sense that they were not part of the Communist world.

Thus liberals kept insisting that the best way to fight Communism was not by building a system of anti-Communist military alliances such as John Foster Dulles specialized in; it was far better, and more effective, said the liberals, to fight Communism by eradicating the social and political injustices which were in their view the breeding grounds of Communist support. Nor were liberals diffident about their ability to show other countries how such injustices could be remedied. Plans and programs for land reform, industrial development, democratic electoral systems, and the like were drawn up, and Americans were dispatched to every nook and cranny of the non-Communist world to supervise their implementation. Any regime which resisted such reforms, moreover, was unlikely to win much sympathy from the liberals. Thus the New York *Times*, in its editorial on the assassination of Diem and Nhu in November 1963, commented: "The coup in Saigon was inevitable, and, given the stubborn refusal of President Diem to institute political reforms that had long been urged upon him, it was by this time highly desirable."

In consonance with this attitude toward political assassination, liberals—for all that they often deplored the gross conservative emphasis on military power as the main weapon in the fight against Communism and for the defense of freedom and democracy—also tended to be bolder in the use of force than conservatives. It was under a liberal administration that the United States went into Korea and under a conservative administration that the Korean war was brought to an end. It was Eisenhower who refused to intervene in Indochina and Nixon who terminated the American involvement there; between those two points, Kennedy and Johnson, liberal Democrats both, went to war to prevent the fall of South Vietnam to the Communists of the North. In this they were supported by the liberal "establishment" as a whole, including such major organs of liberal opinion as the Washington *Post* and the New York *Times*. As the *Times* put it in 1963 in explaining the "strategic importance" of Vietnam for the United States: ". . . [I]t is not just the prestige and the billions of dollars of the past decade that must be salvaged, nor the honor of 16,500 American soldiers now committed to Vietnam that must be redeemed there. Really at stake is the ability of the West, and particularly of the United States, to withstand the third major form of aggression attempted by Communist nations since World War II."

BUT if it was the liberals—and the "best and brightest" among them—who led the United States into the Vietnam war, it was also the liberals who later turned against this war which they themselves had made, who led (or at least coopted) the opposition to it, and who developed or propagated all the arguments against it. Some liberals said that the American intervention had been a mistake; some said that the American intervention had been immoral; some said that the American intervention had been a crime.

Whatever the precise ground or whatever the degree of intensity with which liberal opposition was expressed, however, the effect of this turn in liberal opinion was to call much more than the Vietnam war itself into question. Doubts were now raised about the entire role of the United States in world affairs. Had it after all been such a good idea for the United States to undertake the containment of Communist power? Was such a policy still necessary? Was it viable? Was it desirable?

To all these questions more and more liberals were coming to answer, No; and the measure of their deepening isolationism was the slogan on which their candidate in the 1972 presidential election ran. Twelve years earlier John F. Kennedy had promised "to get the country moving again," by which he meant, among other things, that he would pursue a more vigorously active foreign policy in opposition to Communism than Eisenhower had; and he promised in his inaugural address that the United States would "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship . . . to assure the survival and the success of liberty." In 1972, George McGovern, sounding an old isolationist refrain, asked America to "come home again," by which he meant, and was understood to mean, not only that he would take the country out of Vietnam but that he would—in a favorite liberal phrase of the day—"reorder our priorities" from an emphasis on foreign affairs to a primary concern with domestic problems.

Of course there would still be foreign affairs even in this scheme of things, but they would now be based on cooperation rather than power and conflict and competition. Our new role would be determined by an understanding, in another favorite liberal phrase of the day, of the growing "interdependence" of the world and the declining capacity of the great powers to impose their will on other countries. The world was becoming a place in which—as a prominent exponent of this view would later put it—"nobody was in charge." The United States could no longer control its own

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

allies or clients, and even the Soviet Union was having similar troubles, as witness the break-up of the Communist world into opposing camps and the growing independence of national Communist parties in Europe and elsewhere of Russian control. Nor could either the United States or the Soviet Union any longer throw its weight around with impunity. Sadat could expel Soviet technicians from Egypt without fear of military reprisal, and the once mighty United States (as would soon be demonstrated in irrefutable terms) could be held helplessly at the mercy of a few otherwise impotent oil sheikhdoms. Given all this, a kind of peaceful collective bargaining on a planetary scale must inevitably be the order of the future.

Whatever else may have been envisaged by the liberals for the United States in this truly brave new world, it was certainly not the use of American power to check the spread of Communism and "to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

The new isolationism of the liberals came to a highly dramatic head shortly after the 1972 election in an attack (led by one major organ of liberal opinion and former supporter both of presidential power and of American military intervention in Vietnam, the Washington *Post*) on the powers of the Presidency; and subsequent to that, in a campaign (led by the other major organ of liberal opinion and erstwhile proponent of American interventionism, the New York *Times*) against the CIA—that is, against, respectively, the main instrument for conducting an overt anti-Communist foreign policy, and the main instrument for conducting a covert anti-Communist foreign policy. To be sure, this was not the issue explicitly or perhaps even consciously raised by the Watergate and CIA investigations, but it is hard to believe that liberals would have mounted an offensive against "the imperial Presidency" or the CIA at a time when they were still enthusiastic about anti-Communist interventionism. Indeed, the Presidency would never have grown to "imperial" proportions without the encouragement and support of liberals, who encouraged and supported it precisely (though not exclusively—there were also domestic considerations) because such a Presidency was necessary to the carrying out of an interventionist foreign policy. So too with the CIA, which was as much a liberal creation as "the imperial Presidency" and whose political tone large numbers of anti-Communist liberals—including scholars, writers, and trade unionists—evidently found sufficiently congenial until just the other day.

Would the liberals have mounted an offensive against the powers of the Presidency if one of their own had been sitting in the White House in 1972? Perhaps: the isolationist current had grown very strong by then among liberals, it was pressing hard for institutional change, and the obvious first target was the Presidency. Fortunately for the liberals, however, the office was now occupied not by a Kennedy or even by a Johnson, but by their ancient enemy Richard Nixon, a man they detested with a passion only matched in living memory by the hatred of Wall Street for Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Like Roosevelt, Nixon was forging a new coalition which, there was good reason to fear after the 1972 landslide, might freeze the liberals out of the White House for as long as the New Deal coalition had frozen the conservatives out in an earlier day. The liberals would therefore have had every incentive to go after Nixon even if an attack on the powers of the Presidency had not been demanded by their deepening isolationist mood. As it was, they were presented with an opportunity to wreak vengeance on the person of Richard Nixon, to improve their future political prospects, and at the same time to dissociate themselves entirely from the very presidential prerogatives which they had formerly helped to establish and justify but which now no longer suited either their political interests or their new political beliefs.

It is no wonder that the liberals should have seized on such an opportunity. But it will always be a great and impenetrable wonder that Nixon cooperated—by acquiescing in the pointless break-in of the Democratic offices in the Watergate, by participating in the cover-up, by first taping his own incriminating conversations and then failing to destroy the tapes while he still had time to do so. Nevertheless, cooperate Nixon did, and he, who had originally risen to national prominence through the exploitation of a congressional investigating committee, was now destroyed by exactly the same instrument but to exactly the opposite effect. In exposing Alger Hiss as a Soviet agent, Congressman Richard Nixon had made a major contribution to the bringing home of the Communist menace and therefore to the mobilization of popular support for an interventionist foreign policy. In being exposed as an abuser of the public trust, President Richard Nixon made a major contribution to the weakening of the single most important institutional instrument for the execution of an interventionist foreign policy and therefore to the entrenchment of the new isolationism.

The campaign against the CIA was an equally vivid case of dramatic reversal. In fact, the entire episode was like a replay of the days when committees both in the House and the Senate were investigating the activities of the Communist party—especially its underground activities—and when anti-Communist staff members and other bureaucrats leaked a daily diet of sensational revelations to an entirely complaisant and uncritical press. Now the same thing was happening, but this time it was an agency of our own government which was in the dock, investigated by both houses of Congress, exposed and held up to public scorn by the media, harassed by private vigilante groups (such epiphenomena of Mc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Carthyism as *Red Channels* and "Aware!" had their obverse equivalents in *Counterspy* and The Fifth Estate), and portrayed as virtually unlimited in its power to harm. The Communist once supposed to be under every American bed was now replaced by a CIA agent, and the very people who had once ridiculed this exaggerated idea of Communist infiltration into American life saw nothing paranoid in analogous fantasies about the CIA.

Abuses were another matter, for the CIA had undoubtedly been guilty of abuses. But then so had there undoubtedly been Communists working in the State Department in the days of McCarthyism—and no more than merely purging the State Department of its few Communist employees seemed the true purpose of McCarthyism did cleaning up these abuses seem to be the animating passion of the liberal attack on the CIA. While there was much pious talk both in Congress and in the press about reforming the CIA, there was also much—unmistakably more sincere—talk among liberals about abolishing it altogether, or at least restricting it to the gathering of information and destroying its ability (through statute or strict congressional oversight) to conduct covert operations of any kind against the spread of Communism. For if what McCarthyism did was mobilize support for an anti-Communist foreign policy by making the danger of Communism seem domestic and immediate, the attack on the CIA was conversely bound to help demobilize support for an anti-Communist foreign policy by representing such a policy not only as a threat to the freedom and independence of other countries, but also as a sinister danger to American liberties here at home.

The new liberal isolationists, then, in their campaign against "the imperial Presidency," first damaged the main institutional capability the United States possesses for conducting an overt fight against the spread of Communist power in the world; and then in their campaign against the CIA they helped reduce the main American institutional capability for conducting a covert fight against the spread of Communist power in the world.

But what about the conservatives? Listening to the speeches of Republican politicians or reading the writings of conservative ideologues in the past few years, one would get the impression that they are entirely untouched by the new isolationist spirit which now pervades the Democratic party and the liberal community—that they are even mounting a determined opposition to this spirit. Richard Nixon repeatedly spoke of the need to keep America strong in order to balance Soviet power, and he authorized action first to prevent Allende from taking over the government in Chile and then to topple him after he did. Gerald Ford pleaded with Congress to make a last-ditch effort to save Cambodia and South Vietnam from falling to the Communists. Henry Kissinger strongly supported sending aid to the anti-Communist forces first in Portugal and then in Angola and warned of the dire consequences of Communist participation in the government of Italy and other West European countries. All this is entirely consistent with the hard line conservatives have always taken on the issue of fighting Communism.

But the truth is that conservatives in office and in practice have been rather less bellicose than their standard rhetorical gestures would lead one to suppose. John Foster Dulles encouraged the idea that the United States would work for the liberation of Eastern Europe from Communist rule, but the Eisenhower administration did nothing when the Hungarian revolution erupted. After Richard Nixon took over conduct of the war in Vietnam, he sent troops to Laos and Cambodia and bombers to Hanoi, but he also withdrew all American forces from that part of the world, inaugurated a policy of détente with the Soviet Union, and opened up relations with Communist China. Gerald Ford, his successor, went to Helsinki to sign a declaration legitimating Soviet control of Eastern Europe without even insisting on a reasonable quid pro quo, refused to meet with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn for fear of offending the Soviet Union, and continued the Nixon policy of supplying the Soviets with grain and technology in exchange for little more than a smile from Leonid Brezhnev.

This curious habit of speaking loudly and carrying a small stick is equally characteristic of Henry Kissinger, who often sounds like Churchill and just as often acts like Chamberlain. Is Kissinger then an isolationist? The suggestion seems absurd until one coldly considers the actual content of the policy toward Communist power with which he has been associated or over which he has presided for the past seven years. However one might choose to describe this policy, one would scarcely call it a species of anti-Communist interventionism. It is, rather, a policy of phased American withdrawal from anti-Communist interventionism undertaken in recoil from the trauma of Vietnam. For among conservatives no less than among liberals, the experience of Vietnam raised doubts about the continued desirability of an American foreign policy based on active opposition to the spread of Communism. One might almost go so far as to say that in withdrawing from Vietnam, in inaugurating a détente with the Soviet Union, and in opening up relations with Communist China, Richard Nixon was executing in almost every detail the new foreign-policy program of the liberals (in this way "dishing" the liberals, as the Tory Disraeli said he had "dished the Whigs" by executing their idea of democratizing the franchise). But thanks to Nixon's decision to withdraw gradually from Vietnam instead of all at once in 1969-70, the liberals were left free to go on attacking him; and thanks to the presence of Henry Kissinger in his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

administration, they had someone other than Nixon to whom they could assign credit (as indeed they did in those far-off days, to the point of virtual beatification) for a foreign policy which in every other respect was indistinguishable from their own: a policy, that is, of withdrawal from anti-Communist interventionism.

That withdrawal from anti-Communist interventionism was Nixon's policy in Southeast Asia no one would any longer dispute. Whether he and/or Kissinger intended something similar elsewhere in the world is not entirely clear. In private Kissinger has been heard to say—and in public to suggest—that the Soviet Union is in an aggressive imperialist phase while the West has moved into the first stages of a Spenglerian decline. The implication is that Soviet preeminence in the world is inevitable, and that the best the United States can do is get out of the way as gracefully as possible, in as dignified a manner as possible, and with a minimum of such disruptive (or "destabilizing") consequences as might draw us into conflicts with the Russians for which we no longer have the power or the stomach.

According to this reading of his, a responsible statesman presented with such conditions by the inexorable movement of history will do what he can to insure an orderly retreat; otherwise circumstances might easily get out of control, with very bloody consequences for all concerned. He will also attempt (as Metternich in roughly analogous conditions did) to slow the process down; after all, who knows what might happen to change things or even to forestall the inevitable for an indefinite length of time? Thus there will be moments when a show of force will have to be mounted or an impression of resolution conveyed. But the overall direction will be back: in the American case today, back to the Western hemisphere and possibly even to the territorial limits of the United States, where, protected by an invulnerable arsenal of nuclear missiles capable of destroying the Soviet Union many times over, we ourselves would be safe from Soviet invasion or attack.

Does this mean that even Western Europe and Japan would be left to their own devices? So it would seem, for if avoiding war, or even the serious risk of war, with a newly aggressive Soviet Union is now the overriding imperative of American foreign policy, it follows that we can no longer afford to extend protection even to Western Europe and Japan, whose survival as free societies may, in this conception of the world, still be desirable but can no longer be considered a vital American interest.

It also follows, and by the same logic, that the United States can no longer afford to play an active role in the affairs of the Middle East. Middle Eastern oil is a convenience to this country, but it is not a vital necessity—certainly not vital enough to justify the risk of war with the Russians (as the United States demonstrated in its pacific response to the embargo and the price rise only two years ago). Middle Eastern oil is, however, vital to Western Europe and Japan, a matter quite literally of economic life or death. If the Soviet Union were to gain control over the oil, Europe and Japan would be at the mercy of the Russians. So long as it is considered a vital interest of the United States to prevent such a thing from coming to pass, we have a vital interest in the Middle East. If, on the other hand, the United States is no longer willing or able to prevent the spread of Soviet power even over Western Europe and Japan, then we no longer have a vital interest in the Middle East, and we should be preparing to withdraw.

But if this is our objective—as Henry Kissinger's view of the nature of world affairs today suggests that it is or should be—why are we apparently doing the opposite? For far from withdrawing, the United States has to all appearances been deepening its involvement in the Middle East; and far from avoiding a confrontation with the Russians, we have evidently been attempting to expand our influence in the Arab world at their expense. Or so it would seem to the naked eye. Not so long ago, however, the United States, in the process of withdrawing from its involvement in a different area of the world, also seemed for a time to be getting in deeper. Thus the bombing of Hanoi, the mining of Haiphong harbor, the invasion of Laos and Cambodia looked to many people like a widening of the Vietnam war when, as everyone now knows, all these actions were actually a tactic in an overall strategy of withdrawal. What I am suggesting is that the deepening of the American diplomatic presence in the Middle East may be comparable to the "widening" of the war in Indochina. There the United States reversed the classic pattern of *reculer pour mieux sauter*, retreating in order to advance. Instead of retreating in order to advance, we advanced in order to retreat. There is a reason for thinking that American policy in the Middle East under Nixon, Kissinger, and Ford may also be a matter of *sauter pour mieux reculer*. The reason is Israel.

In Vietnam, Nixon and Kissinger put pressure on a reluctant Saigon government to accept the Paris Accords, a deal involving concessions which that government considered risky in exchange not for commensurate concessions from the other side but rather for American guarantees and promises of future support. There is an uncanny structural similarity between these arrangements and the Sinai Agreement of 1975, in which the United States forced a reluctant Israel to make serious concessions not in exchange for a proportional quid pro quo from Egypt but in exchange for pledges of future American military aid. The Paris Accords represented a finished series of negotiations while the Sinai Agreement was only the first "step" in a process to be completed either by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

further "steps" along the same route or by a wholesale arrangement of a similar nature negotiated at Geneva. But except for this, the two agreements bear a very strong family resemblance. Given this resemblance in structure and approach, it seems reasonable to ask whether they may also not have been designed with a similar end in view.

As is clear in retrospect, the function of the Paris Accords was to persuade ourselves and everyone else that peace had come to Vietnam and that the United States could honorably and in all good conscience go home. The United States government has now evidently persuaded itself that the Arabs no longer wish to destroy Israel, that the only thing at this point which threatens Israel's existence is Israel's own "intransigence," and that it is for the Israelis' own good that they be forced and bribed into making what they themselves consider dangerously one-sided concessions. Is the United States then preparing to drag a reluctant Israel into a Geneva Agreement which we and all the rest of the world will celebrate as the achievement of peace, so that with the problem of Israel's existence finally settled, at least to our own satisfaction, we would then be free to withdraw from the Middle East—and the risk of any further confrontation with the Russians—just as we did from Vietnam?

Of course, Israel is not Vietnam. Everyone says so, and everyone is right. Israel is a democracy, it has cultural and other affinities with the United States, it commands enormous popular sympathy in this country (and not only among Jews), and it asks not for American soldiers to defend it but only for arms to help it defend itself. For all these reasons, it is almost inconceivable that the United States would force Israel into a settlement guaranteed by promises of American aid and then fail to make good on our promises as we failed to make good on our promises to South Vietnam. The fact remains, however, that if American policy is to be built on the assumption that we no longer have the will or the ability to check the spread of Soviet power, withdrawal from the Middle East—and from Western Europe and Japan—where confrontations with the Soviets are ever-present possibilities, becomes an ineluctable necessity; and the future of Western Europe, Japan, and Israel becomes ominously problematic.

Bearing in mind, then, that isolationism today means refraining from the use of force to prevent the spread of Communism anywhere in the world except the United States (and perhaps its immediate environs), it is by no means absurd to see Henry Kissinger as an isolationist—a reluctant and heavy-hearted isolationist who would no doubt much rather be presiding over the growth of an empire, but who finds no realistic alternative to the withdrawal of the United States from the role it has played since the end of World War II in checking the expansion of Communist power. If under such conditions the West Europeans or anyone else should find a way of resisting Soviet domination, so much the better. If not, just as we can now trade with the Soviet Union itself, not to mention other Communist countries, so we could do business with a Finlandized Europe or a Sovietized Middle East.

This coming together of the liberal idea that "nobody is in charge" with the conservative idea that we can under any circumstances do business with Brezhnev—that there is, in other words, developing a new "planetary bargain" in which our coinage will, for the liberals, be moral and, for the conservatives, financial—has been described by Peter L. Berger as "the greening of American foreign policy."

Of such a "greening" it is clear that the major, in fact the only, beneficiary would be the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is a great superpower, and it has moreover entered into a period of active imperialist expansionism. When the "Chamberlain" side of Kissinger asks American critics of the SALT agreements, "What in the name of God is strategic superiority? What do you do with it?," he might better address the question to the Russians, who seem to know very well both what it is and what you do with it, and who could easily enough give him the answer. What you do with it is intimidate other nuclear powers who might wish to stand in your way when you start to move ahead. And just as the United States shows every sign of pulling back and moving out of their way, the Russians show every sign of intending to move ahead: in the past they maintained a navy designed for defensive purposes only, but now they are building a navy designed for offensive purposes as well. We, on the other hand, are refusing to construct enough ships to keep up with normal attrition, let alone with the Russian build-up. The Russians are on the road, then, to achieving superiority not only in strategic nuclear weapons but in conventional forces as well. Once they have done so, they can be expected to go as far as their own ideological and imperial ambitions, and the absence of effective resistance, will carry them—and that could well be to the ends of the earth.

While many American liberals, dreaming the dream of a new international order of which no one is in charge, still seem unaware of the extent of Soviet ambitions, and the extent to which they have thus far been limited in action by American power, almost everyone else in the world understands both these things very well—including, most notably and most significantly, the mainland Chinese and the Communist parties of Western Europe. Knowing their Russian cousins with an intimacy that only members of the same family can command, the Communists of China, Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain, and France not only recognize that an isolationist America will have the effect of exposing the rest of the world to Soviet domina-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion; they are all also desperately afraid that an isolationist America will leave even them exposed to Soviet domination.

The ironies here verge on the comic. In America, critics of anti-Communist interventionism have pointed to the break-up of a monolithic Communist world as an argument for abandoning that policy. Perhaps, they have said, it made sense for the United States to intervene in Africa and Asia to prevent local Communist takeovers at a time when all Communists were centrally controlled by Moscow, but it makes no sense at all at a time when any given Communist regime is as likely to be an enemy as an instrument of Soviet expansionism. Yet now it turns out that the very ability of some national Communist movements to remain independent of Moscow was all along a by-product of the success of American power in containing the Soviet Union. Moreover, to make the comedy of the situation even more bizarre, the United States is now being asked by the Communists of China and of Western Europe to remain active in the fight against Soviet expansionism (or "hegemonism"), to stay in and strengthen NATO, and to maintain a credible nuclear umbrella over Japan and Korea. Here then is a new use for American power: to save Communism from the Russians.

Is THIS what the United States should do? Would making the world safe for Communism in a variety of national forms be a better use for American power than making the world safe for Soviet Communism alone? It is difficult to see why. Communism, whether dominated by Moscow or not, has been a curse. To this day there is not a single Communist country in the world in which even the mildest criticism of the government, not verbal and most certainly not organizational, is permitted. To be sure, people are no longer shot or imprisoned with such orgiastic promiscuity in the Soviet Union as they were in the years when some *sixty million* persons passed through the system of prison camps Solzhenitsyn calls the Gulag Archipelago—*political* prisoners, people whose only crime, that is, was opposition or even suspected opposition to the regime. Yet neither can Soviet citizens today speak their minds in public, let alone organize politically, without being thrown into jails or insane asylums where they are "cured" of their irrational ideas and then released or deported. Nor is there the slightest possibility that even the most minimal degree of civil or political liberty will ever be allowed under Communism. In Yugoslavia, where a bit more freedom has been permitted from time to time than in other Communist countries, hundreds of people were recently thrown into prison for speaking their minds in a new crackdown the dimensions of which are yet to be determined. In Cuba, by Castro's own count, there are still over 22,000 persons in jail for the crime of criticizing his regime.

Communism, in brief, has enslaved every people which has had the misfortune to be forced to live under it—and there is still not a single case of any people freely choosing by majority vote to live under it. The one Communist government which has ever come to power through the polls did so in Chile, where the "Marxists" received about 35 per cent of the vote and then proceeded to alienate the population by wrecking the economy (which was then of course blamed on the machinations of the CIA).

This record is consistent with the abysmal economic performance of Communist governments everywhere, emphatically including the Soviet Union. After sixty years of Communist rule, the only thing the Russians seem to be good at is producing nuclear bombs and missiles. The Soviet Union is still unable to feed itself despite vast expanses of fertile land, and still has to apply to the United States for technological help in developing other industries. Not only, then, do they destroy liberty and humane culture wherever their writ extends ("A curse on all Bolsheviks," said the great Bolshevik Leon Trotsky himself, "they bring a dryness and a hardness into life"), the Communists do not even make good on their promises to improve the material lot of the people. Nor do they make good on their claim to serve the value of equality. Everywhere they begin by dispossessing and murdering the older ruling classes (in Cambodia, they emptied an entire city, driving some three million people, including infants, graybeards, and invalids, into the countryside at gunpoint to die of starvation or scratch out a dubious living from the earth—a New York *Times* correspondent, witnessing this, was astonished but did not feel he could pass judgment on so novel a revolutionary "experiment"). But as Djilas and others have shown, everywhere the old inequalities of class and rank and status are gradually reintroduced. China, we are told, is an exception. Perhaps. Who knows anything about China? The Italian Communists, we are told, are different. They believe in democracy and pluralism and they are very good at running Bologna. In fact, they are not even Communists at all: they are urban reformers, or they are social-democratic marranos, the Third Force of old in disguise. Perhaps. Who knows anything about what the Italian Communists would do if they ever acquired power? Probably not even the Italian Communists themselves.

In short, if a world dominated by Soviet Communism is likely to be a world given over to barbarism and misery, the chances are that a world dominated by Communism in a variety of national guises would be an improvement only to the extent that it is better to be enslaved by autonomous local tyrants than by puppets of a foreign land.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nor could the United States survive as a democracy in either kind of world. The new isolationists say that Communism has acquired so much power—power in the form of Soviet nuclear capability, power in the form of Russian imperial dynamism, power in the form of the size and potential of the population of China, power in the form of the persuasiveness of Marxist ideology to the masses of mankind—that we have no choice but to accommodate ourselves to it. The liberals among them believe that such an accommodation is a precondition for the development of a new and more peaceful and more equitable world order. The conservatives entertain no such wishful illusions. Conservative isolationism does not promise that getting out of the way of the Russians, or playing off one form of Communism against another, will usher in the golden age. It merely holds out hope for the survival of our own democratic system.

But this vision, on its face so hard-headed and mature and unillusioned about the nature of things, is at bottom as wishful as the liberal dream of a new international order based on interdependence and cooperation. It is an American version of the old Soviet idea of "socialism in one country," and it is even more vulnerable to the criticisms which were made against that idea by the proponents of the "theory of capitalist encirclement." No matter how large or how invulnerable our second-strike nuclear forces might be, a Communist culture global in its dimensions—whether or not it was under the control of Moscow—would be impossible to shut out entirely. The Communist temptation to subvert and undermine the last remaining democratic society would be irresistible, and to combat such subversion would require a degree of repression which would itself endanger democratic freedoms. Yet even if it were somehow possible to combine a high degree of repression with a satisfactory degree of political liberty, the will to resist so universally prevalent a "truth" would in all likelihood grow weaker and weaker within the United States itself.

We can even now detect foreshadowings of how this process might work. Thus the idea that we are unable to do anything about the spread of Communist power in the world has already—such are the psychological dynamics involved—begun to merge into the view that anti-Communist action is undesirable anyway since there is nothing extraordinarily wrong with Communism as such. The Soviet Union has fewer apologists in the United States than ever before, but this is not because more people have become convinced that it is a wicked and dangerous country; it is because fewer and fewer people any longer consider the Soviet Union to be any better than the United States. Yet neither do many people seem any longer to think that the Soviet Union is significantly worse than the United States: they have their problems, we have ours. Communist China, on the other hand, is nowadays very popular—with liberals because it is so egalitarian and with conservatives because it is so hard-working and disciplined. Other Communist countries are either ignored or, like Cuba and North Vietnam, sympathetically treated for the most part in the American press.

What we see in this newly tolerant, and even benevolent, attitude toward Communism is the slow erosion of our own sense of political value in response to the Communist challenge—an accommodation in the sphere of ideas to match the accommodation we have been making in the sphere of power. Our own political culture has always held up liberty as the highest political value, while the political culture of Communism has always scoffed at and denigrated liberty as a bourgeois delusion. Therefore our unwillingness or inability to condemn their crimes against political liberty—which they of course do not regard as crimes at all—can fairly be described as a symptom of the surrender of our political culture to theirs. This becomes especially clear when we join with them in condemning the very same political crimes when committed by right-wing dictatorships; and it becomes clearest of all when we join with them in denouncing ourselves, who in this respect are probably less guilty than any other nation in the world, for being a "repressive" or even an incipiently fascist society.

This particular species of anti-Americanism has (at least in America itself) subsided lately, but only to be replaced by its obverse: a tendency, now widespread both here and in the Western democracies generally, to dismiss liberty as unimportant in comparison with rival values like equality and community which the political culture of Communism honors more highly (though infinitely more, of course, in the breach than in the observance). What good is freedom, one often hears it said, when it can coexist with racial discrimination, or discrepancies in the distribution of wealth, or alienation, or pollution of the air and water? One rarely hears it said that (as an honest socialist once observed) those countries which have put liberty ahead of equality have generally ended up doing better by equality—and, one might add, most other desirable social objectives —than those with the reverse priority. And even more rarely does one hear it said, either in America or in the other Western democracies, that liberty is a blessing in itself, quite apart from the many blessings which have flowed from it wherever it has been given a chance.

A European intellectual recently characterized this kind of spiritual surrender as "Finlandization from within."

If, therefore, to make the world safe for Soviet Communism by withdrawing, or using American power to make the world safe for Communism in a variety of national guises (in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cluding, in the bitter end, an American one) were the only alternatives open to the United States, there would indeed be cause for panic and despair everywhere on the earth. But these are not the only alternatives open to the United States. There is a third—and that is to use American power to make the world safe for democracy.

The idea of making the world safe for democracy was much ridiculed after World War I, and its cold-war equivalent, defending the free world, was much ridiculed in its own time as well. In the 20's the ridicule had a pacifist tinge—how could anything good be expected to come out of anything so hideous as the war in the trenches had been? But in the cold war, it was not so much the *idea* of defending the free world which came under attack as the claim that American policy was actually based on any such objective. Listing the non-free countries with which we were allied in the fight against Communism became a drearily familiar refrain in the polemics of the 50's and 60's, reaching its climax in the sustained assault on one South Vietnamese government after another for its offenses against liberty and democracy. How could we claim to be defending freedom when we were defending regimes like these? Surely in doing so we were showing that we were really up to something else—making the world safe for capitalism, or acting out paranoid fantasies of an imaginary Communist menace, or merely throwing our imperial weight around for its own sweet sake.

Yet the United States *was* leading a free-world alliance in the entirely meaningful sense that every free society in the world was either a member of the alliance or under its protection. It is true that out of prudential considerations, like the need for bases, certain authoritarian regimes and right-wing dictatorships were also included in the alliance, but in view of the fact that such associations were important in holding back the single greatest and most powerful threat to freedom on the face of the earth, they could be justified as an unfortunate political and military necessity. And even on the level of moral argument, the case could be made that the dictatorships of Franco and Salazar, or of Park and Thieu, at least left room for a greater degree of freedom than the Communist countries, and were also far more likely to be replaced in the future by democratic governments. (Indeed, while there is still not a single instance of any Communist regime being overthrown and succeeded by a democratic government, Spain and Portugal today have a fighting chance to acquire democratic freedoms and Greece has already done so.)

There is, in addition, one other sense in which the United States could truly have been described as the defender, or even as the evangelist, of freedom and democracy. I refer to the efforts of many different kinds which were constantly being made by the United States to convert the non-democratic countries of the non-Communist world into democratic societies. These efforts succeeded magnificently in West Germany, Austria, Italy, and Japan; they met with varying degrees of failure almost everywhere else, and they got us into deep trouble in Vietnam (where we sanctioned the assassination of Diem in order to establish a more representative government in Saigon and therefore found ourselves assuming complete responsibility for its fate). That efforts of this nature were made at all is sufficient testimony to the purposes of the United States in the fight against Communism. But that they were made in Vietnam in combination with a large-scale military intervention is of course also what threw the entire policy of which they were a part into discredit and disgrace.

Does that policy deserve such discredit and disgrace? Did the aim of defending the free world against the spread of Communism necessarily dictate an American military intervention in Southeast Asia? In principle yes, but in practice obviously not. Even at the time, there were staunch anti-Communists who warned, on purely prudential grounds, against going to war in Vietnam. We could not, they said, win such a war; it would drag on interminably; it would tear our society apart, as the Algerian war was tearing French society apart; and it would dissipate our power to conduct an effective fight against Communist expansion elsewhere.*

From this point of view, Vietnam was the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time; and when we intervened we deceived ourselves first as to its character and then as to its progress. When we were losing we said we were winning, and in a desperate effort to win, we applied military force in ways that were at once brutal and inhibited and that inspired widespread repugnance at home. But wrong as the war the United States fought in Vietnam was in all these respects, it was not wrong in the purposes for which it was fought. Those purposes were to check the spread of Communism into a country which, though not free, still enjoyed more liberty than any Communist regime allows (and certainly more than it has enjoyed since falling to the Communists), and by so doing, to discourage further Communist aggressions against other countries in which liberty already existed or at least had a chance to develop. That the American military intervention in Vietnam ended in failure, and worse than failure, is an argument not against those purposes but against the lack of wisdom with which they were in that instance pursued.

THIS is not, of course, the "lesson" which has generally been drawn from Vietnam. The main lesson many people wish to teach is the isolationist lesson that we can no longer do

* See, for example, "Asia: The American Algeria" and "Vietnam—Another Korea?" both by Hans J. Morgenthau in COMMENTARY (July 1961 and May 1962, respectively).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

anything to make the world safe for democracy—anything either to check the spread of Communism or "to assure the survival and the success of liberty." The new liberal isolationists say that we lack the power and the new conservative isolationists say that we lack the will.

Do we lack the power? Certainly not if power is measured in the brute terms of economic, technological, and military capacity. By all those standards we are still the most powerful country in the world. In fact, our fantastic agricultural productivity and continuing technological inventiveness have increased our power as against that of the Soviet Union; and because of Soviet dependence on us for grain and technology, our leverage over the Soviets is now greater than ever. If we want to use this kind of power to hold them back, we are in a perfect position to take many measures, within the limits of prudence and practical wisdom, to defend already existing democratic societies, as well as non-democratic societies which show a potential for evolution in the direction of civil and political liberty, against the threat of a system which makes even such a slow evolution impossible.

The issue boils down in the end, then, to the question of will. Have we lost the will to defend the free world—yes, the free world—against the spread of Communism? Contemplating the strength of isolationist sentiment in the United States today, one might easily conclude that we have. Among the elites, both liberal and conservative, isolationism is very strong and may perhaps itself be seen as the symptom of a process of "Finlandization from within" which has already begun to occur. But voices are also once again being raised on the other side, some within the intellectual community, many more within the labor movement, a few in the business world, a few in the world of electoral politics. Even Henry Kissinger's voice has now at least rhetorically been added to the chorus of opposition. Although his "Chamberlain" face still seems to be in evidence in his approach to the SALT negotiations, he has lately—since Angola and the emergence of a newly aggressive push for Communist participation in the governments of Italy and France—been giving freer and freer rein to his gift for sounding like Churchill. He has expressed concern over "a self-destructive, isolationist course in American life"; he has warned that we may soon "become an isolated fortress island in a hostile and turbulent global sea, awaiting the ultimate confrontation with the only response we will not have denied ourselves—massive retaliation."

We also know from the extraordinarily enthusiastic response to Daniel P. Moynihan at the UN how exhilarating very large numbers of people in this country find a sheer willingness to proclaim the superiority of our political values to the political culture of Marxism and Communism, how sick they are of creeping Finlandization from within in the sphere of political discourse, how happy they become when they see the United States once again speaking in clear accents as the leader of the "liberty party."

Still, these sentiments have not yet been decisively tested in the national political arena, and until they are so tested, the question—the ultimately crucial question—of whether the new isolationism is as pervasive among the masses of Americans as it is among the elites—will have to remain moot. If it should turn out that the new isolationism has indeed triumphed among the people as completely as it has among the elites, then the United States will celebrate its two-hundredth birthday by betraying the heritage of liberty which has earned it the wonder and envy of the world from the moment of its founding to this, and by helping to make that world safe for the most determined and ferocious and barbarous enemies of liberty ever to have appeared on the earth.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moses for Moderns

Edward Grossman

OF THE men who have imitated Moses recently, not all have done it unconsciously. In the speech which he delivered to the striking garbagemen in Memphis, Martin Luther King said it was possible that he wouldn't live much longer, but he didn't mind, because he had "been to the mountaintop," and he had "seen the Promised Land." Recordings indicate that the audience in that church knew what King was referring to and accepted his metaphor. A few days later, he was murdered, but though he was promptly idealized, he has not actually been idolized much.

By way of contrast, in a culture so distant from, even hostile to, the Bible, as the one in China, the leader survives to see his plans for his people presumably realized, and begins to be assimilated to the godhead before he dies. His survival and deification are at odds with what is known about Moses, yet, like Moses, Mao is revered by his followers as a teacher, a revealer and instiller of transforming, liberating ideas and rituals, which are re-taught and policed by a priestly cadre that he had no choice but to create.

The priests may seek to petrify or pervert the leader's teachings. They may fail at their duty and permit backsliding. Then he gets restless in his place between heaven and earth, and enlists faithful zealots to keep his revolution pure; at such times the dramatic memory is constantly invoked of the trek through the wilderness, where enemies and temptations had to be overcome, during which slavish habits were painfully discarded. The parallels multiply—it is not hard to be enchanted by them. Instead of unwieldy tablets, there is a handy pocket book containing the teacher's sayings, published in editions of tens of millions and treated like a magic object.

No need—is there?—to belabor the point. The scene is crowded with would-be Moses personalities. Their proliferation in cultures where the Bible was a foreign graft suggests that the figure of the paternal yet liberating lawgiver is transcultural. Whether these prominent men are monstrous or laughable, benign or very deadly, must be judged by the individual case. What they plainly have in common is their effort to be different from old-style tribal or clan chieftains; they rule more than one tribe or clan, and upset some, though by no means all, traditions. They strive to be different from the garden-variety tyrant who relishes power for its own sake—they are altruistic and self-sacrificing. Their activity must not reflect mere ambition or energy; it must be possible to picture it in the service of something larger, possibly an ideology, preferably the nation. The leader hates to be regarded as just another robber or psychopath on a grand scale. He hankers to combine, as Moses is said to have done, the roles of activist and thinker.

If the Mosaic model is mainly favored in other than Western societies, nevertheless the personality of Moses continues to be of interest to people who have inherited what used to be called Judeo-Christian culture, who live in democracies, who are governed by unremarkable party men and technicians, and who may profess a healthy distrust of charisma. Because their culture is disarrayed, and they are liable to feel demoralized, the figure of the man without whom it is impossible to imagine that culture having come to be, takes on some morbid interest. What was Moses like? Popular imagination in the West is entertained by personalities and biography; since Freud, intellectuals too can admit they want to know a writer, a thinker, an artist, no matter how great or how long dead, personally, relieved of his mysteries, full-face, life-size.

II

THE actors who have played Moses in the movies have squared off and displayed profiles worthy of glamorous presidential candidates (recall Charlton Heston). The latest Moses, Burt Lancaster, is also handsome and mesomorphic; at times, however, his face becomes mild and beautiful, his blue eyes turn from metallic to liquid, and theoretically that should give him some advantage over his two-dimensional predecessors.

In fact, Lancaster comes across as a rather kindly, somewhat bewildered figure in *Moses the Lawgiver*, a six-hour movie made for television, which was broadcast in weekly segments last summer on CBS and an edited version of which, under the title *Moses*, has now been released as a feature-length film. Apparently he decided to play his star part with a sense of burning dignity. He tries

EDWARD GROSSMAN, who is currently living in Jerusalem, writes on a variety of social and cultural matters.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to move slowly, as if feeling his age and grappling with concepts (at sixty, Lancaster is blessed with a springly athlete's body). He often knits his brows. Deep intensity, strong intellect, separation from his people, the capability to be cruel, are seldom the effects that he achieves. So far as it leaves an impression, Lancaster's performance makes Moses look like a likable contemporary carried along by events he can't understand. He doesn't look as if he could have written the Law. And when Dathan and the rebel priests accuse him of being a "murderous trickster," there seem to be no grounds for it.

Anthony Burgess, who wrote the screenplay, probably didn't intend that accusation to sound gratuitous. The Moses in his script speaks informally, like anyone today, and he has his moments of vacillation where he goes in and out of focus, but he can be resourceful, menacing, and sardonic: "I'm sick of you all!" he snarls. "To make the world took six days; to make laws for the Israelites may take much longer," he quips on his way up to Mt. Sinai. All in all, this Moses is probably meant to be heroic. He chooses life as against the death-principle of Egypt. Hearing a voice, he frames laws sanctioning and sanctifying the right life and forces them down the throat of his fickle, gifted people, having asked them first, rhetorically, whether they chose to accept the Law and the Covenant that goes with it. Meanwhile, he leads them back to a homeland they are bound to recover violently.

BURGESS seems to have familiarized himself with some of the scholarly disputes, selecting here and there without excessive thought to unity. The Israelites try to do away with Moses in the desert. The idea of the one all-powerful God is actually a revival of an Egyptian heresy. The voice that speaks to Moses from the Burning Bush identifies itself as the same that spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses is a Hebrew child saved from drowning, as the Bible says. Yet in the best modern manner, conforming to enlightened understanding of religious experience, the disembodied voice on the soundtrack when Moses kneels before the bush is Lancaster's own, speaking in a lower register.

On paper, Burgess's eclectic Moses gives some promise of being formidable. But though Burgess appears to have been genuinely interested in the leader's personality, he also had to be professionally intent on writing a fast-moving, episodic entertainment covering most of the epic ground: his audience demanded that. *Moses the Lawgiver* is just the first of a string of Bible spectacles that are going to be turned out by an Italian company with American money, and televised internationally. (*Jesus of Nazareth*, directed by Franco Zeffirelli, is next.) Spoken in English, dubbed and/or subtitled in many languages not excluding Japanese, these movies are being counted on to reach hundreds of millions of viewers. The large audience is curious about personality, conceived of as gossip or "human interest"; but it wants action too. Much of the focus on character, and whatever rigor and imagination Burgess wished to bring to bear in drawing Moses, must be sacrificed in translating the script into good mass entertainment.

To a producer having this kind of appeal in mind, casting Lancaster makes sense. Viewers are more comfortable with a star they know. Lancaster's face commands instant recognition, making the great antiquity being depicted less savage and strange. To use unknowns, as Pier Paolo Pasolini did in *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, is risky business. Carrying logic further, it was also right to cast Anthony Quayle as Aaron, Irene Papas as Zipporah, and Ingrid Thulin as Miriam, no matter that Moses and his relatives appear to have nothing in common, not even a family resemblance. Thulin, her hair dyed Semitic-black, sings Miriam's song of triumph in a Swedish accent; Quayle enunciates superbly, and sometimes manages to convey a weak and pragmatic Aaron; Papas wears her patented Greek-widow mask. It would have taken a director with other ambitions, in control of considerable skills, to break through these stars and make their talents work dramatically. Gianfranco de Bosio, the main director of *Moses the Lawgiver*, who has experience mostly in staging operas, did not live dangerously with his actors and actresses. Following Burgess, he provides a short glimpse of Moses crawling into a sleeping bag with Zipporah, but there is so little heat or awareness between Lancaster and Papas that this scene too leaves a small impression.

An opera director can be trusted to set up scenes as if posing principals and chorus. Moses, the leader, stands before the people to mediate between them and God. Lancaster, who furrows his forehead but never stammers, tells them, "You are free men . . . free even to make a Covenant with God." The crowd he addresses is small, not your huge mass; experts now estimate that the number of people leaving Egypt was about five thousand. "Will you make that Covenant?" he asks, and the crowd responds hesitantly in the affirmative, smelling trouble. Before and after the Law is handed down, de Bosio supplies illustrations of each of the Ten Commandments in the act of being violated by the Children of Israel, with an Italian emphasis on adultery. These scenes too are rather static. Nevertheless, by repetition, Burgess's point tends to be driven home that the Children of Israel and their leader have an uneasy relation.

Occasionally, de Bosio does pull off a kinetic scene. The riot around the Golden Calf by a troupe of Israeli dancers moves. De Bosio has several crisp cuts in Pharaoh's palace and in the desert when the Israelites war with the Amalekites. These underline the heaviness, the dutifulness of the rest of the six hours. Everything is there except Balaam's ass. The attempt to cram every-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing in can be traced to Burgess's script. The hodgepodge qualities of *Moses the Lawgiver* are no doubt also due to the fact that it was interrupted by the Yom Kippur war. A second director, James Hill, was brought in for continuity and transition scenes, in order that the production might be finished not too far behind schedule. Hill, who made the animal movie *Born Free*, has a more ingenious touch than de Bosio; the contrast jars.

On the other hand, the decision to make the movie in the Sinai and the Negev was a lucky stroke. The modest, conscientiously-researched costumes, the suggestively-detailed instead of grossly-didactic renderings of Pharaonic grandiosity and death worship, help remove *Moses the Lawgiver* a distance from the usual, campy Hollywood treatment. The play of light on the dunes and rock of the original wilderness makes the most important difference, however. This is a "set" in the notable meaning, an environment that can change those who find themselves in it.

Previous Exodus movies gave no hint of connection between the psychic happenings that befell Moses and the people, and the landscape they experienced them in. The Exodus used to be shot in the Mojave Desert, a convenient locale, precinct of cowboys and Indians, not forsaken by God, not inhabited by Him. Remote-location equipment has been miniaturized and perfected since the days of Cecil B. DeMille; improvements in lenses, cameras, film, and laboratory processes make Technicolor seem crudely innocent. That is one of the reasons the desert is so much more present in *Moses the Lawgiver* than in *The Ten Commandments*. Is it also because something peculiar abides in the Sinai-Negev? The wilderness photographed in *Moses the Lawgiver* by the chief cameraman, Marcello Gatti (who photographed Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*), strongly suggests that this particular stretch of nature might have moved a susceptible man to thoughts he had never had before. Even in the confines of a TV screen, the desert here is without limit and the opposite of dead or monotonous. De Bosio, the director, was not up to exploiting this potential in full or relating his actors to it, especially Moses. But there are some good moments, and one stupendous shot, lasting five seconds at most, of a priest blowing the ram's horn at dawn—the blasts echo along the granite cliffs, as if man and rocks were in dialogue.

III

In his new book about Moses, the English literary critic David Daiches concentrates on the man's role and accomplishments, and steers clear of imagining his face or proposing to delve into the recesses of his character.* For Daiches, Moses is a "community legislator." It was in the desert that he got an idea about communal law, and it was there that he passed it along:

> *Something* happened at Sinai in which Moses and lawgiving were involved. By a study of the way in which the traditional accounts of that event were preserved and eventually written down we can try to discern the outlines of the character of the man Moses and of the special nature of his contribution to the laws and customs of his people. Further than that we cannot go.

That Moses actually lived and should be given the credit for promulgating laws and for beginning to form a nation out of a wandering group of ex-slaves, Daiches considers settled and proven, even though the biblical account is riddled with mythological and contradictory elements that "no historian could accept." Daiches is rational, modern. He relies on evidence from linguistics, textual analysis, archeology, philology, anthropology, and so on, to assure his readership beyond a reasonable doubt that Moses "was a real person." Daiches tells what John Bright, H. H. Rowley, Martin Buber, and other reputable scholars and commentators have had to say about Moses and what he did. Moses was not a superman or a saint, and Jews have never believed he was; the Mosaic concept of God was different from the heretical sun-worshipping monotheism of Pharaoh Akhnaton; the Mosaic Law, based on absolute commandments attributed to God, departs from the Code of Hammurabi, based on social utility. So Daiches keeps the record straight, and puts each important episode, miracle, and idea into the context of a secular explanation, anticipating questions and patiently answering them:

> With respect to Moses it is impossible to say how much of the Law associated with his name derives in any significant way from him, how much was modified or codified by him and how much was taken over by him as traditional—or indeed how much traditional material ignored by Moses remained alive and was later absorbed into the Mosaic code. But it was Moses who gave the Law a new and special kind of authority by delivering it not only as the commands of God, but as the commands of the God of nature and of history who had by covenant made himself the *melech* (king) of Israel, and whose divine-royal edicts were in an absolutely unique category. To ask such a question as, "Did the historical Moses really believe that he was delivering to his people laws revealed to him by God?" is to show a certain naiveté about the nature of belief and of tradition.

Daiches instructs his readers gracefully and relatively painlessly—this is, after all, also a picture book, large but not oversize, that would rate a place on coffee tables had it been produced with more attention to lushness and graphic unity. The well-known paintings and statues by Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Doré, Dali, and others are here, and photographs of the landscape, flora, and fauna of Sinai. Some of the illustrations are ex-

**Moses: The Man and His Vision*, Praeger, 264 pp., $19.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tremely fine, others acceptable, a few perfunctory, some poor. There is no danger of the words becoming caption material. Daiches's text is the thing.

It might be said that it is sensible to a fault, that his approach and cast of mind are too steadily reasonable, that he is unable or determined not to entertain difficult or provocative ideas which could better explain some matters. Daiches seems aware of this, and occasionally draws back from the brink of an empirical fallacy, choosing a subtler path. For example, although he takes many of the Mosaic regulations to be simply hygienic, regarding the taboo on pork, Daiches doubts that this was a public-health measure designed to protect against trichinosis; it ought to be understood, he says, as another of the disciplines imposed on the people when they accepted the Covenant, another symbol of election and of difference from surrounding peoples, some of whom are known to have worshipped the boar.

In this case, at least, Daiches might have been advised to stay empirical. As W. F. Albright, in a work not cited by Daiches, wrote:

> The common explanation for the biblical legislation concerning pork—that it was not eaten because it was sacred among pagan peoples—is sheer nonsense. The pig was sacred in certain places and periods, but large and small cattle were even more generally sacred. . . . If there were any doubt about the empirical explanation, it should be removed by the fact that both the hare and the hyrax . . . were also prohibited. This can be explained only by the fact that both animals are carriers of tularemia.*

But more often, Daiches is overly reasonable. "The story of Pharaoh's ordering that every newborn Hebrew child should be cast into the river can be no part of the original story of the Exodus and of Moses' part in it," he remarks. "It makes no sense to diminish the number of your slaves this way." He does not recall that Pharaoh made the Hebrews slaves because he was frightened by their "growing numbers." Only after bondage had failed to curb breeding did the killing of the male children begin. Readers of this book are spared being confronted directly with the possibility of something so unreasonable and "modern" as genocide. The irrational, crazily inefficient aspect of genocide as state policy is beginning to be understood but is not yet widely appreciated, in spite of studies of the Third Reich and Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag* books—in fact, the contradictory aim of the apparatus is to work the slaves to death. In a study of Moses, to avoid this is to turn away from dark avenues of conjecture: if Moses was born during a state-inspired mass murder, how might this have altered his self-perception when he discovered who he was, and how would his people have looked on him, seeing that he was not only an Egyptian prince, but in all probability one of the very few Israelite males of his generation?

Daiches shuns "amateur psychoanalysis." He prefers not to speculate on Moses' mental make-up and deals with the subject only so far as he must report what the traditions have to say about it. Moses was meek, yet immovable; stern, fierce, yet compassionate; a genius about society, yet a loner:

> Moses, as the biblical account repeatedly emphasizes, was a man who found his deepest insights in solitude. Here then is another paradox about him: he was essentially a community legislator and as such left an indelible mark on the character and thought of his people, but the nature of the legislation he promulgated for the community was revealed to him in mystical isolation.

Daiches understands that this isolation was not only psychological, but geographical, and he pinpoints it on the map:

> Whether Moses' experience in Midian represented in some way a picking up of the threads of an ancestral Hebrew cult, half forgotten during the long Hebrew residence in Egypt, or whether it represented a quite new kind of spiritual intuition, connected or unconnected with the simple Midianite culture, there can be little doubt that the tradition of Moses fleeing from Egypt to undergo some kind of inward transformation alone in the desert is absolutely central to the Moses story and must represent a basic truth.

And Daiches suggests to his gentle reader that the time they spent wandering in this territory with their leader was crucial for the liberation of the Israelites:

> A people that has been delivered from the power of a despot to become an independent group wandering on their own is not likely to accept tamely the authority of any new leader. Having learned to hate despotism, they are suspicious of any form of authority. They will take nothing on trust. Everything must be demonstrated.

IV

APARTMENT dwellers are not apt to take seriously prose concerning the metaphysical properties of the desert, celebrating the impact of desert life on manners and morals: it was done to a turn in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, which everyone has read or heard about, and from which, of course, a movie was made. To write, as Daiches does, "The 'land of Midian' to which Moses fled . . . represented . . . a simple way of life and a stern desert moral code in sharpest contrast to the cosmopolitan syncretic polytheism of the Egypt he had grown up in," is to offer the reader something he seems to have been in safe possession of before. Unluckily, the poor-

* *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Humanities Press, 1968).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

est photographs in Daiches's book are those of the wilderness.

A stronger writer, or one to whom the lyric comes naturally, or who writes out of experience, may still move the civilized city man with a bit of nature writing, but only slightly, vaguely. T. E. Lawrence is a case in point. Martin Buber, in his book on Moses, is another:

> [Moses and the elders] have presumably wandered through clinging, hanging mist before dawn; and at the very moment they reach their goal, the swaying darkness tears asunder (as I myself happened to witness once) and dissolves except for one cloud already transparent with the hue of the still unrisen sun. The sapphire proximity of the heavens overwhelms the aged shepherds of the Delta, who have never before tasted, who have never been given the slightest idea, of what is shown in the play of early light over the summits of the mountains. And this precisely is perceived by the representatives of the liberated tribes as that which lies under the feet of their enthroned *melech*.*

Buber understands, more than that, he *sees*, the connection between the vision of nature afforded "primitive" men, and their religious experience. Something that commences as an impression on a sense organ passes off into the ineffable, if the man is prepared to let it. Buber's language, which is trying to draw a picture here, becomes sweetly exalted coping with something that can't be described.

Can a photograph, or a group of photographs, do better? Partly it depends on how the viewer's imagination is used to operating, whether it is more open, alert, and active than his imagination as a reader. Furthermore, no photograph is guaranteed to catch the energy that is in an object, a combination of natural forms, or a place. When it comes to the locale where Moses had his visions, some photographs may have an edge over a thousand words, however. The coffee-table albums on the Sinai produced since the Israelis conquered it in the Six-Day War have many brilliant and arresting illustrations; the pictures, like the undistinguished, melodramatic prose that accompanies them, concentrate on sites associated with the Exodus, Lawgiving, Wandering, and Approach to Canaan.† These volumes are chronologically organized; relevant verses from the Bible narrative are quoted conspicuously, as it were to authenticate the pictures. The multiplication and preoccupation of these albums is a sign that the Sinai is not-so-dimly apprehended as the womb or crucible, or other some such original container, of Jewish nationality.

Christians, too, have been attracted by Sinai. There is a large 19th-century literature by English and French travelers who detoured en route between the pyramids and Jerusalem. A couple of years before the Six-Day War, when the area was closed to Jews, a team of American archeologists inventoried, restored, cleaned, and for the first time properly photographed the icons and paintings at St. Catherine's monastery, reputed by Christian tradition to be built on the spot where Moses had his first vision. The illustrations in the book which came out of this expedition are astonishing.** Most are inspired by the New Testament, but there is one representation by an anonymous Byzantine artist of Moses untying his sandals before the Burning Bush. This picture is more than a thousand years old and it radiates a spectrum of vivid color. Moses has the rosy face and wispy beard of a flower child. It is a most elegant visualization of the great image-hater. Its beauty is tremendously pleasurable, finally peaceful and soothing; purporting to depict Moses at the turning point of his life, it seems misleading, for the fearful element is missing.

The most useful picture book for those looking for Moses in the Sinai desert is a collection of black and white plates by the Israeli archeologist and photographer Benno Rothenberg.†† The photographs were taken during the five months when the Israelis held the Sinai in 1956-57. Except for a short supplement telling where each picture was taken, there are no words. Most of the pictures are from the southern one-third of the peninsula: not from the dunes and strategic passes that are in the news, but the mountainous interior that has no military, economic, or political importance. In these pictures there are some ruins of human handiwork, but no human figures. It is impossible to describe the photographs; every simile is inexact. To say that the inanimate forms, in which immense force appears only tenuously bound, resemble sculptures, is to put things the wrong way around; it is rather toward this ideal of materialized energy that sculpture strives, falling short. To compare the compositions of cloud, shadow, rock, surreal oases, and cold, crystal-clear winter light to a dream where random elements somehow belong together, is also unsatisfactory, too tame; the elements cohere in these pictures threateningly, as in a nightmare.

The effect of Rothenberg's pictures is frightening. To study them awhile in quiet solitude is to begin to lose familiar bearings. This is good when trying to imagine what might have happened to Moses in this region. But even sympathetic fear can't bring the whole man back to life.

V

BUBER, who said that his purpose was to describe Moses "as a concrete individuality," added that it was impossible

---

* *Moses, the Revelation, and the Covenant* (Harper & Row, 1968).

† See, for example, *In the Footsteps of Moses*, by Moshe Pearlman (Crowell, 1975).

** *The Monastery of Saint Catherine and Mount Sinai*, by George H. Forsyth and Kurt Weitzmann (University of Michigan Press and Harry Abrams, 1973).

†† *God's Wilderness* (Nelson, 1962).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to submit a consecutive record of the course of events; for what is provided in its sole source, the biblical narrative, deals for the greater part with only two incidents: the Exodus and the camping at Sinai. To these are added an introductory legend regarding the previous history of Moses, and a number of more or less fragmentary reports of post-Sinaitic events. It is impossible to produce a historical continuity out of these disparate saga complexes.

This is one of the reasons—not the most important—why it may be futile to ask for a life-sized Moses, and why every attempt so far to give us one has been disappointing. Even if *Moses the Lawgiver* had realized the best potential of Burgess's script, uninterrupted by ads for toothpaste and cars, it would have left Moses a mystery, and failed to make dramatic sense of his whole life. The gaps in the biblical narrative that Buber alludes to are also necessarily gaps in the life of Moses, since the national adventure is continuous with his life as long as he lives. To fill in the gaps so that national and personal history coalesce, and what is imagined doesn't suffer from invidious comparison with the Bible, would take imagination, respect, wit, knowledge, and stamina greater not only than what Burgess, writing against production deadlines and the imperatives of show business, could hope to muster, but what Thomas Mann himself, with all the time in the world and only himself to please, would probably not have been capable of.

Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers* is the most nearly successful attempt to flesh out a biblical story. Where the Bible is silent, Mann provides chapters full of curious, plausible detail, and where he returns to the basic narrative, he makes speech and motivation "modern," without, however, trivializing character or depriving the story of dignity. Over all this, his idiosyncratic imagination broods playfully, pompous and ironical.

The novelists who have had the bravery to try the same thing with Moses have not been in Mann's class (Sholem Asch, Howard Fast, etc.). It is tempting to speculate what Mann might have been able to do with Moses, to wish that he had had the time to try (it would have made a natural sequel) and to wonder why he didn't choose Moses in the first place. A possible answer to the last question, it should be fairly clear, is that Moses is too large, important, serious, intimidating a figure for a writer as ambitious and wary as Mann to encompass. Mann chose well. Joseph is no great man, not in the Bible, and not in Mann's version either. His story is that of a clever young man growing up to responsibility and humility and pride—it could be a *Bildungsroman*—while the doings of his relatives could comprise a family chronicle.

As tradition has always had it and most scholars have lately been agreeing is probable, Moses thought up the Law. This alone makes him so formidable that typically the effort of writers, poets, and other artists to imagine him has exposed more about their limitations than it has revealed about their subject. For all but a few, it is actually foolhardy to imagine Moses. What attitude to take, and how to make it stick? Delightful storytelling is out of place but tempting to try, worshipfulness is cloying but hard to resist especially as Moses ages, irony is equally irresistible for some, and denigration has its attractions for the resentful. None of these attitudes will really do. The typical approach to Moses, as in Burgess's script for *Moses the Lawgiver*, wavers among the first three.

The artist imagining Moses would have to have, in addition to the talents and equipment listed previously, a spacious, unifying idea that would be much more than a patch on his subject. Michelangelo imagined a human colossus in the act of turning his head to glare at something. A remarkable idea is not enough, however—Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* comes to mind for example. In this book Freud, who said he wrote it as a poet, not as a scientist, gives the impression of kidnapping Moses. True, he doesn't intend to tell who Moses was (besides an Egyptian) but rather to propose what function his alleged murder by the Israelites had in the origin of the collective neurosis of the Jews. In the process of making his case, Freud renders the historical Moses a figure as flat as any on the wall of an Egyptian tomb.

One of Freud's pupils, Theodore Reik, wrote his own book on the Sinai revelation, and in it he respectfully and briskly rejected the possibility that Moses was Egyptian.* He allowed by implication that the embarrassment aroused among professional Bible scholars by Freud's performance was understandable and not just the reaction of guild-members whose turf had been invaded. Reik, more familiar with the Bible and the scientific sources than Freud was, also produced a work that has its place in the realm of simile: Sinai is *like* something else. Reik's thesis is that whatever happened in the desert, it was experienced by the Jews as a puberty rite like those undergone, for instance, by teen-age aborigines in the Australian bush and observed by anthropologists. For Reik, the great conceptual novelty introduced by Moses was not any full-blown monotheism, but the idea of a God who can't be represented in an image. In this Reik may well be correct, but actually the man Moses and the concepts attributable to him are not Reik's main concern. His principal desire is to make the Exodus and Sinai events "intelligible in the perspective of depth psychology." Because for him the hero and subject of these basically universal events is the Jewish people, not Moses, Moses need not come to life or be considered too closely. He remains secondary, standing out no more than "a figure in the foreground of a bas relief."

What then would the hypothetical artist, equal

*_Mystery on the Mountain_ (Harper & Row, 1959).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the task of bringing Moses to life, have to do? In order to make of Moses "a concrete individuality," from whom sparks appear to fly, he would have to be made to stand out in three dimensions in the very center of things, of course, and the artist's unifying, seemingly simple idea about him would have to be startling but could not be specious or far-fetched. There would have to be a basic respect working for the biblical text, for its plain meaning and for the wide but not infinite range of its possible implications. The artist would also have to restrict himself to one or two scenes from the overcrowded life of his subject.

It happens that some of these qualities attach to Arnold Schoenberg's opera, *Moses and Aaron*. Composed in the early 30's and never finished, it is sometimes highly praised, but seldom performed, due it is said to its extreme difficulty.* In the opinion of George Steiner, *Moses and Aaron* is "a drama of non-communication, of the primal resistance of intuitive or revealed insight to verbal and plastic incarnation." This would make it modern to begin with, for unlike our ancestors we take the isolation of each in his body with his thoughts for granted, unresigned to it, continuing to suffer. The opera's composition in the twelve-tone scale makes it modern as well, not simply technically. The sounds are those of enervation, of emotion warped and unbalanced struggling against being magnetized by madness. Moses himself is possessed by something. Schoenberg got no further than the end of Act Two, and at that point his Moses cries out despairingly, "O word, thou word that I lack!" He is "slow of speech"—exactly as he reminds God that he is in the Bible. Schoenberg takes this impediment literally, using it as a unifying dramatic device and a symbolic expression of the peculiarity of Moses' thoughts, which distance him more than usual from others and place him in danger of losing his mind.

Moses speaks, he is never required to sing. Designated a bass, he is to break his teeth painfully on each hard German word, while Aaron flows along in a relatively easy tenor, traducing the message of the Law. The device is startling. Much depends on the actor or "singer" playing Moses, of course, but even from Schoenberg's scenario alone (written in blank verse), without benefit of music, voices, or set, one can begin to understand the antagonism between Moses and his brother, and the epochal meanings in his earliest dialogue with God.

There are, indeed, only two scenes in the opera as it exists—the Burning Bush and the Golden Calf. In an important sense, therefore, Schoenberg doesn't invent anything. The burden of the first scene is the reluctance of Moses to obey the divine call; of the second, his anger and despair at his people's inability to live by the Law, and Aaron's complicity. It is like that in the Bible. While making up his own words in a language of Exile and providing music that resonates with the anxieties of an age of masses and machines, newspaper headlines and radio static, Schoenberg returned and stayed close and faithful to the Bible. He modernized, but did not psychologize away—the voice that Moses hears in the first scene is God's, not a projection of Moses' mind, disordered by the desert sun.

If the Moses of this opera is not just "hearing things," and the presence of God is supposed to be real, then the admiration and pity aroused might be said to be similar to that produced by classical tragedy. This presents a problem. Is Moses a tragic figure in the Bible, and did Schoenberg mean him to be tragic? It is a commonplace that there is no tragedy in the Bible (because God is just), and that tragedy is alien to the Jewish tradition and the Jewish religious experience. *Moses and Aaron* does not reflect or comment on that experience from the outside; it identifies and locates itself within it, being the work of a believer—Schoenberg, a Jew by birth who had become a Christian, composed it after converting with great seriousness back to Judaism. It is hard to answer whether he meant Moses to be tragic, for the work is unfinished; if the biblical account itself were to stop after the Golden Calf episode, we would have a very different Moses. But Schoenberg's Jewishness may help to clarify something crucial about the nature of the mania that seems to possess his Moses.

VI

A WEIRD passage (Exodus 4:21-6) tells how, after the dialogue at the Burning Bush, Moses is attacked in his sleep and Zipporah saves him by circumcising their son. The scene was duly filmed in *Moses the Lawgiver*, where it was weird, slightly funny, and nothing more. "You have become a bloody husband unto me," the Bible has Zipporah say. Scholars have wracked their brains, some have gone to ethnological extremes, trying to explicate this episode. As Buber understands it, Moses is not attacked by a demon, but by God, "because the man's devotion to Him after his resistance has been surmounted does not appear full enough." God claims "the entirety of the one He has chosen; He takes complete possession."

This accords with what is still to be encountered among some of those whom we would confidently and respectfully call "God-fearing" if that state of mind didn't seem queer and old-fashioned: people with it have a unity, calmness, and stability of consciousness, and their will power is enhanced, as if it had completely surrendered to or been taken over by something exterior to themselves and unselfish. In Christian terminology this is the state of grace, epitomized in the lives of the saints.

The Bible says that Moses spoke with God di-

*The opera is available on records in two performances, one with the Austrian Radio Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Gielen (Philips, 670084) and a new release with the BBC Symphony, conducted by Boulez (Columbia, M233594).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rectly, that in this he was unique, but there is no intimation that as a result he became superhuman or even a saint. His consciousness and personality are not suddenly and permanently unified by the Burning Bush dialogue. He is liable to suffer tormenting doubts and moments of despair. The outrageous humor of the biblical account, that has Moses and God continually nagging at each other like parents shifting the blame for the way the children are turning out, underscores the point, that Moses is denied peace of mind almost as long as he lives. This chronic uneasiness that the Bible insists on throws doubt on whether Moses was possessed by God as Buber, the theologian, characterizes such possession.

Like its competing pseudo-discipline psychiatry, theology deploys a lingo notorious for subjectivity and imprecision, and loaded with ill-concealed judgments of value. For a theologian, possession by God, impossible to define so that the non-believer will understand, is obviously a desirable thing, and the man thus possessed is considered to know the highest truths and enjoy the best mental health imaginable. For a psychiatrist, obligated by his training if not by his nature to believe that religion is an illusion without much of a future, anyone who comes and says that God has spoken to him, and means this literally, can hardly be said to be sane or healthy. Modern men of the West—those who are apt to have a sneaking curiosity about Moses—are a natural prey to the second (the psychiatric) prejudice, without, however, necessarily accepting the pejorative charge attached to "not sane."

But the doctors of divinity and psychiatry seem to agree when it comes to differentiating true or godly from bogus or demonic possession, and sanity from various states of mental illness. God claims "the entirety of the one He has chosen," says Buber. In this emphasis on integrity Buber has much in common not only with Gentile theologians, but with most psychiatrists. Paul Tillich defines demonic (undesirable) possession as an "attack on the unity and freedom . . . of the personality . . . [it is a] cleavage of the personality." The definitions of health and disease put forward by nearly all psychiatrists of the rationalistic school have sounded similar themes: i.e., the highest stage of maturity, the ideal if by no means most pleasant state of mind, consists in the submission of the undivided consciousness to the demands of the reality principle—such a state corresponds to freedom. Over against this, immaturity or disease consists in being divided against oneself, and indulging in comforting illusions.

The doctors agree that sanity and divine possession are both indivisible, but disagree on what these states of mind should be made of. Their disagreement is nothing less than the old one over reality and how it can be known. The argument has traditionally been carried on by professional philosophers; in our own day, in a far less orderly, less self-conscious, less self-confident fashion, it is worried over by nearly everyone who thinks. Has the flower child here, beatific as the Buddha with or without drugs, attained to a precious unity of consciousness, or enslaved himself to illusions which, on dissipating, will make him a candidate for suicide?

Moses, at any rate, would be out of character with a smile on his face, even the deepest, most "inscrutable" smile. He seems characteristically to be troubled, disturbed, angry, "mad." He is not of one piece, he is not at peace. It is questionable, also, whether "God-fearing" applies to him—not only does he talk with God, he talks back. Among the other Hebrew prophets, only Jonah refuses outright to heed the call, and when he tries to escape, he does it without a word. Moses is, to put it mildly, very strange this way. Since his concepts and accomplishments are undeniably great, his strangeness accords well with a fallacy popular among the stupid and the highly intelligent, which has hung on from olden times to the present: i.e., that geniuses are out of their minds.

Two thousand years ago, the Hellenized Philo wrote that Moses was "possessed." He meant that Moses, like an oracle, lost his senses at crucial moments and became a passive, ecstatic tool of the gods or God. Jewish tradition does not accept this, however; even its reputedly most mystical, least rational, sources are firmly on the other side. The Zohar follows Maimonides when it says that all the prophets *except* Moses got the message incompletely, dimly, because in an ecstasy; Moses received it "standing and with all his senses unimpaired." In fact, Ezekiel, Daniel, and others testify to experiencing abnormal bodily states (shaking, sweating, fainting) and hearing God in visions, dreams, and riddles. None such are reported in connection with Moses. In the passage that tells of his face "shining," dazzling the people who looked at it, it is clear that this is not the effulgence of ecstasy, but a result of having been exposed to God, like a sunburn.

The face of the false messiah Sabbatai Sevi is reported by someone who saw it to have been "like the face of Moses which was like the face of the sun." This was when the unfortunate Sabbatai was in one of his manic moods. Observers, sympathetic and unsympathetic, say that something seemed to take Sabbatai over. For the Jewish commentators, such a loss of consciousness has always been, at the least, a warning sign, and, for some, definite proof that the prophet is "false"—speaking in the name of demons or only pretending to have received God's word. On a merely occupational level, the pagan oracle, the seer, prophesies out of an ecstasy, and needs to induce it in himself in order to do his thing. In sharp contrast, even the biblical prophets who testify to ecstatic experience do not speak of it as a precondition, but rather a by-product of being in contact. The prophets—Moses is recognized as the father or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ideal type—rarely have recourse to drugs or chanting (Samuel is an exception) or other stimuli, and they are not known (except Elijah) for going out into the desert on purpose like hermits and working themselves into a state alone in the middle of nature.

Yet Moses suffers this chronic division between belief and doubt, and he sees a bush burning in the desert. Is he sane? "The scientific hazards," a theologian has warned, "involved in the attempt to expose, on the basis of literary remains, the subconscious life of a person who lived thousands of years ago are so stupendous as to make the undertaking foolhardy."* The temptation is hard for modern people to resist. We know that some sorts who seem to have had a family resemblance—perhaps as bastards do—to the prophets, were insane. Sabbatai's biographer, using historical materials and rigorous methods, declares "with almost absolute certainty that Sabbatai suffered from a manic-depressive psychosis."† Another reason for psychologizing, of course, is that prophets can be frightening. To make a diagnosis on him may just as effectively neutralize Moses as imagining that he is Burt Lancaster. "The tendency to treat the prophet as a candidate for hospitalization . . . makes us inattentive to what is essential and creative in the prophetic consciousness."** The insight has been put into words before. "They call me mad," Jeremiah complained.

A finding of insanity doesn't necessarily disqualify the prophet in everyone's eyes, however. Insanity always has its partisans, whose influence is spread through the atmosphere. The same modern man who might say Moses made it up to impress the Israelites, or, if forced to admit that is unlikely, says Moses must have been cracked, is not really sure in his heart whether madness might not be the most authentic, sincere, and admirable response that anyone, and especially a great man, could have to the world, then and now.

VII

In Schoenberg's opera, the idea that Moses fixes on actually consists of four ideas so closely interrelated that they become one for the prophet: God is, He is inconceivable, He has chosen the Israelites, and it is the greatest of evils to try to make an image of Him. Since Moses is not just a writer or an adviser or gadfly to politicians, but preeminently the prophet who is a politician/legislator/judge himself, as well as an abstract thinker, he must convey the idea-cluster to the people and see that they hold to it. The people are not up to their task. The split in Moses between belief and doubt is caused by the gap between the perfection of the idea and the unworthiness of the Israelites.

In the Bible, this psychic wound torments Moses each time the people fail, and above all when Aaron makes them the calf. But it is partially healed by time, to such a degree that Moses dies easy, having given the Israelites his blessing. On the basis of the biblical account, too, a case can be made that from the abstract principles of the First and Third Commandments (the existence of God and the ban on idols) the Second Commandment follows ("No other gods before me"), and that from the Second Commandment flows the rest of the Law, the practical, down-to-earth, ethical directives. In fact, arguments have been elaborated over the years, not by believers alone, to the effect that justice-hunger is impossible without belief in the existence of one invisible God. More radically, it has been suggested that freedom and sanity are not to be attained or retained in the absence of such a belief.

If Schoenberg was persuaded by such interpretations, he didn't show it explicitly; his Moses is not preoccupied with ethics or justice, and he is interested in freedom only slightly. Immediately in the first scene of Act One, the voice says from the Bush, "You must set your people [*Volk*] free." The implication is that the idea, not their leader (*Führer* is the word Schoenberg used) will liberate the people; but the implication and the concern with liberation are fleeting and they are not picked up again. It is the pure idea of the First and Third Commandments of the Law that possesses Moses. When he hears from the voice that "your people are the chosen ones before all others," it is clear to him that this election is to the service of the idea. Even before the calf is made, Moses has few illusions: election will be a burden. But he doesn't care, as long as the burden is carried. His suspicions are alerted, he begins to feel the maddening pain, when his brother describes election as a happy event and condition. "I love this humble folk," Aaron sings later, after Moses has destroyed the idol. "I live just for them/and want to sustain them." To which Moses replies, "My love is for my idea./I live just for it! . . . They must comprehend the idea! / They must live for that end!"

Does their leader believe that the Israelites forfeit the right to live if they don't "live for that end"? Is he ready, eager, to see his *Volk* destroyed if they let him down? There is no question of such a mad reaction by Moses, not in the Bible, and not in Schoenberg's opera. In the Bible, Moses executes the ringleaders, then intercedes with God to give the people another chance—and if not, let Moses be "blotted out." In the opera, Moses is not shown interceding. His despair is complete, deeper than in the Bible, yet it doesn't touch the people's right to live. He curses the idol, not the people.

Schoenberg's Moses is not identical with the biblical Moses, but his ability to make this distinction, draw this line, even in the depths of despair, gives him an important quality in common

* *The Prophets*, by Abraham J. Heschel (Burning Bush Press, 1962).

† *Sabbatai Sevi*, by Gershom Scholem, translated by R.J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton University Press, 1973).

** Heschel, *op cit.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the hero of the original story. If the prophet wanted the people to be destroyed completely, we would be obliged to pronounce him insane, however that term is defined. Unlike Jeremiah or Ezekiel, Moses never threatens such a thing. Instead, he banishes the Golden Calf, with such ease and certainty that the reader or listener cannot fail to be impressed. Something steady and undivided remains at the center of Moses' personality even after doubt has permanently claimed its portion.

Note the reason, in Schoenberg's opera, that Moses curses the idol. Not because the demonic is made visible in the calf, because nature-cult and animal-worship splinter the personality with their dialectic of enthusiasm and exhaustion, frenzy and bafflement, producing social instability. No such involved, utilitarian thinking. Moses banishes the idol simply because it is forbidden by God. The doubt that tortures him does not affect his religious beliefs.

WITHOUT the motive of religious belief, the opera would not have half the force it does. The belief was evidently Schoenberg's own, carefully thought-out, irrational, by no means anti-social, but as solitary in its feeling as the individual genius alone. The implications of this belief are at odds with the more comfortable notion, familiar to us, whereby sanity in geniuses is measured by the practical use to which we can put their illuminations. Moses might have heard voices, according to the functional view, but he wasn't insane, because he wrote up durable guides to conduct. Like most other definitions of sanity, this one is socially-determined, arbitrary; it has no application to Schoenberg's hero, who offers only the idea, but who, despite painful disharmony, does not seem to the listener to be out of his mind. In today's jargon, Schoenberg's tortured Moses is paradoxically "together." One listener who has been struck by this hears the source of it in the twelve-tone series:

> Since the baroque age, the triad has signified divine harmony; but with Schoenberg it is the reverse: the intervals and sound-combinations that fall pleasingly on the ear belong to the sensuous world; they symbolize the falling-away from God. God in His infinity, on the other hand, is symbolized by sound-combinations which, according to traditional harmony, have to be considered as dissonances. But they are not dissonances.*

One would have to listen to the opera many times before venturing to say whether this is true or only declarative. Perhaps the twelve-tone combinations do eventually transcend dissonance. What is indisputable after a single hearing is that the opera, dissonant from moment to moment, has an internal consistency and an overall integrity.

However, if Moses offers only the idea, ignoring justice and national liberation, and if the opera ends with him in despair and the tablets smashed, is it justified to call *Moses and Aaron* a religious work within the Jewish tradition? Some critics have tried to interpret the opera as an allegory, with Moses-the-artist facing the Philistines, or, alternatively, the distance between Moses and the Israelites symbolizing the gap there will always be between the artist's ideal conception of his project and his work as it actually turns out. Schoenberg vehemently rejected these twists. He insisted that the "subject" of *Moses and Aaron* was what it plainly appeared to be, and that "its treatment belongs entirely to the realm of the philosophy of religion." But Schoenberg need not be taken at his word. The fact is, his Moses is not the romantic artist, the ego expanding to fill the universe. Though Moses says "my idea," he does not believe he created it or owns it; he is the mediator of it, altruistic, self-less. If this makes him other than human and living for us, nevertheless it does square with the Moses of the Bible. More important, the opera is extremely orthodox in the following respect—in it the epochal meaning of the events in the desert, mediated by Moses, is that from the time of these events onward, the Jews (the ex-Israelites) are marked to bear tangible witness to an abstract idea.

But does the figure of Schoenberg's Moses give the listener the impression of coming to life, as the central personage in a biographical drama is supposed to? No matter who is speaking the role, it seems the answer will be no. This isn't a failure; Schoenberg did not intend biography. "My Moses is like Michelangelo's," he wrote to Alban Berg without false modesty. "He is not at all human." Schoenberg's hero hasn't got the complement of small touches and homely foibles that scale the giant-size figure down to life-size, endearing him to us, giving him the likeness of common humanity. This Moses has a terrible, sublime simplicity; he is the essence of a man possessed by the inexpressible idea of God, rather than the portrait-from-life of such a man. He is the creature of Schoenberg's imagination, which was compelled to express religious belief in music and words. He is not a throwback to three thousand years ago; neither is he one of us.

* *Schoenberg's "Moses and Aaron"* by Karl H. Wörner, translated by Paul Hamburger (London: Faber, 1963).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Salvation Unlimited

John P. Sisk

AMERICA, we know, is not simply a place in which one endures his fair share of the common burden of humanity while he works his way as best he can from the cradle to the grave. It is a church in which he hopes to find, not simply seek, salvation. Now more than ever it is quick salvation, almost as if we sensed (having taken the grim forecasts of the Club of Rome to heart) that the time allotted for the fulfillment of the American promise is running out. Like that great spiritual forefather of ours, the legendary Dr. Faustus, what we want is more, and we want it with the least possible delay. Dale Carnegie courses and Toastmaster Clubs as means to self-realization and success through power over others may have worked well enough in their time, but their promise of a transformation of personality could be realized only through disciplined effort over a period of weeks, even months. Such slow-paced improvement programs belong back in the middle ages of modernity, along with the home-study courses offered by the La Salle Extension University.

Now we need and get, possibly because we need them, things like Erhard Seminars Training (EST), which promises to change one's life radically for the better in two successive weekend sessions; Assertiveness Training (AT), which promises to overcome no less quickly that "inappropriate meekness" that stifles one's hidden potential; and the Maharishi Maresh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation (TM), which one can get the hang of in three one-and-one-half-hour sessions. Even prophets of doom have had to accelerate in order to compete for attention. Not long ago, for instance, Moses David, the guru of the fundamentalist Children of God sect, foresaw the possibility that the expected appearance of a comet "seven times as bright as the full moon" would precede by forty days "the end of things as they now are." Part of Charles Manson's power over his "family" seems to have derived from his ability to convince it that Helter Skelter, like prosperity in the 1930's, was just around the corner.

All of this sounds immoderate to whatever slow-paced traditionalists are left among us. To be an American, however, is to be immoderate, to want Paradise Now, to put it in terms the Australian John Passmore used as he attempted to clarify the immoderation of the 1960's. Of course, it is also American to counteract the immoderation with slow-paced, self-denying discipline. Hence Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Carnegie, and Horatio Alger, to say nothing of Theodore Roosevelt (if you want to make it big, you had better first submit yourself to the schooling of the strenuous life). Nevertheless, immoderation is the cardinal virtue that compels most of us, even when circumstances conspire to make us live moderately. We strain against the brakes of circumstance as if the senior Arthur Schlesinger was right when he argued that when the framers of the Constitution wrote of the pursuit of happiness they meant, and were understood to mean, not "something a people were entitled simply to strive for but . . . something that was theirs by natural right."

Certainly, not all students of the Constitution agree with Schlesinger, but vast numbers of Americans have always acted as if they do, which may have something to do with the note of urgent utopianism in the whole American enterprise. No doubt there has always been among us a minority of Fabian gradualists content to sense themselves moving, however slowly, on an upward path. There is something in most of us, nevertheless, that sympathizes with those "strangers" on the *Mayflower* who made "discontented and mutinous speeches" and vowed, writes Governor William Bradford, that "when they came ashore they would use their own liberty, for none had power to command them."

God knows with what reluctance those forefathers of the dream of instant liberation and its materialistic counterpart, the dream of instant success, agreed to go along with the Mayflower Compact and promised "all due submission and obedience" to the officers and ordinances of the Plymouth Plantation. Their bodies may have lain a-moldering in the grave, but their souls have gone marching on to agitate the Great Awakening of the 18th century and the Evangelical movement of the 19th, both of which anticipated EST, AT, and TM in their tendency to measure the authenticity of personal transformation by the speed at which

JOHN P. SISK teaches English at Gonzaga University in Spokane. Mr. Sisk's articles in COMMENTARY include "The Fear of Affluence" (June 1974), "War Fictions" (August 1973), and "The Curious Analyzer" (May 1973).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it happened. Their restless spirits were at work like yeast among the Transcendentalists (Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, like the *Mayflower* strangers, discovered how free they could be when there were none to command them) as well as among the many communal enterprises that enlivened the 19th century: Shakers, Ephratans, Zoarites, Hutterites, Rappites, Fruitlanders, Brook Farmers, Moravians, Fourierian Phalanxes, Nashobans, and the Owenites of New Harmony. All of these people had been inspired by men or women who, like Albert Brisbane, had been overwhelmed with "the depth and extent of the evil that preys upon Society," had seen "the necessity of a fundamental reform which will attack that evil at its roots and eradicate it," and believed passionately that their objective could be achieved quickly and permanently. Indeed, many of them agreed with John Humphrey Noyes, the founder of the Oneida community, and Ann Lee of the Shakers that the millennium was Now. Meanwhile, their millennial expectations were being played over in a more mundane key by money-hungry robber barons and land-hungry westward-pushing pioneers.

But if the millennium is Now, as the Ken Kesey of Tom Wolfe's *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* and Jerry Rubin of "The Yippie Manifesto" were only yesterday prepared to believe, then what came before Now, having performed its task—or, in another version, having labored long enough to prevent Now—could be dispensed with as the newborn chick dispenses with the shell out of which it is liberated. If the millennium is Now, or just around the corner—if we have arrived at last at the point where with one concerted mighty push we might burst into the clear sunlight of the freedom that has been our birthright all along—then it is understandable that Charles Manson should have been named Man of the Year by the Los Angeles *Free Press*, that Bernadine Dohrn should have celebrated the Manson atrocities as "far out!" and as something the Weathermen could really dig. For once the millennium is apprehended as a real possibility, not simply the stuff dreams are made of, all strikes, however extreme or violent, against established states of affairs tend to become equally virtuous. Ann Lee's sex-denying Shakers (who, apart from their doctrinal abstinence, anticipate the modern rock festival) triumph over time just as effectively as Noyes's sexually liberated Oneidans (who with their holy promiscuity anticipate the Manson family).

ONE might have expected that by 1960 Americans had bought so much snake oil in so many forms that they would automatically be suspicious of any nostrum that promised quick results. Such an expectation would have failed to take into account the accelerated tempo of post-World-War-II reality, in which it became easier than ever to identify salvation with speed. Speed is the least common denominator of EST, TM, AT, Esalen, Scientology, acupuncture, primal therapy, psychic healing, and psycho-cybernetics, to say nothing of light therapy, astral projection, witchery, sorcery, astrology, orgone energy, and Glen Turner's often-sued Dare To Be Great. Zen and Yoga in America immediately shift into overdrive and split into sects the way Protestantism did in the Reformation.

The psychoanalyst Elsa First has observed that "concentration practices of the TM type are considered the most elementary stages of meditation and merely a precondition for further work." This sounds likely enough, but who has time for, or can believe in, a form of salvation that takes time? The faster the pace of life and the greater the number of available options, the more one becomes aware of how little time one has and of the risks involved in serious long-term commitments. To go all out for one person or for a single program of salvation may only be a way of denying oneself the personality-expanding experience of other persons and other programs. Chronologically, the life-span of the average American has never been longer; existentially, however, it has never been shorter. Hence that hounding contemporary fear, perhaps best expressed by the quick millionaires of the rock world, that one will through hang-up or rash overcommitment miss something. This fear is a factor in what Peter Marin, writing in the October 1975 *Harper's*, has referred to as "the trend in therapy toward a deification of the isolated self." Indeed, the "new narcissism," as Marin calls it, is itself a survival technique by which one refuses to join anything or anyone but himself lest some part of his human potential be foreclosed.

The ideal therapy for this assertiveness is the Janovian scream session or the encounter weekend. Critics who doubt that such hasty therapies have much permanent effect assume that participants seek a permanent effect. Actually, the very failure of such therapies to deliver on their promises, so that subjects are not denied the experience of newer and still more exciting therapeutic adventures, may be an important part of their appeal. A truly successful encounter might cut one off from EST, TM, or AT, and so leave one impoverished rather than enriched. With so little time who can afford to be cured?

In our kind of hyped-up society, in other words, normalcy can appear to be not only a drag but a trap: a reconciled, even-keeled state of affairs in which nothing of interest happens because all the occasions of interest have been removed. Who would aspire to the ruts of normalcy when that might mean giving up the creative reactions of the neurotic to the malfunctions and malignancies of the system? R. D. Laing and others of his persuasion have opened out to us the superior pleasures of the melodrama of the emotional cripple as heroic and society-defining victim; and one reason

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

why the victim is so hard to normalize is that de-victimization promises to be such a dull story. There is an "openness," a hypersensitivity to experience in the neurotic victim (so runs the romance of neuroticism that neurotics themselves are not reluctant to encourage) that makes it easy to identify *him* as normal, given our kind of world.

On the other hand, given a genuine desire to escape from the emotionally diminished world of victimizing neurosis, it is not hard to see the attraction of lithium carbonate, now being celebrated as a Cinderella drug in Dr. Ronald R. Fieve's *Moodswing*. Few of us would choose "the traditional and costly" way of the analyst's couch when a pill might do just as well and much more quickly. Traditional analysts, with their conservative tendency to favor earned solutions to human problems, may link this "third revolution" in psychiatry with all the false promises of Timothy Leary's LSD revolution, but at the moment the times are marching to a different drummer. The analysts are competing for a clientele that wants not simply quick salvation but the experience of salvation, which implies the freedom and capacity to keep on experiencing salvation in the greatest possible variety of forms. Such a desire, if it results in more sentimentalists and narcissists than the world can tolerate, may in time produce an abundance of fresh business for the analysts, but in the meantime the latter might be well advised to push lithium—taking ironic comfort, perhaps, from the thought that early in his career Freud himself had great hopes for the quick therapy of cocaine.

RELATIVELY speaking, the narcissist lives a fast life. This is because he has joined nothing, least of all another person. It is the self-transcending commitments that slow us down, make us reconsider, delay judgment or satisfaction as we acknowledge the complicating presence of valued others or valued communal structures that we share with others. The proper symbolic expression for narcissism, as well as its most appropriate form of sex, is therefore masturbation, which might be defined as total sexual autonomy. Insofar as the times have defined salvation as quick and frequent orgasms, masturbation is in analogy with lithium, LSD, and the amphetamines. This is probably why (as Marin might have noted) our romance with masturbation is beginning to compete with our romance with homosexuality. Two of the most widely read novels in recent years, Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* and Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*, have vigorous, if not always joyous, masturbators as central figures. To judge from a preview of it in *Esquire*, Gay Talese's eagerly anticipated masterwork on sex in America will include a section in which an adolescent is caught up in an elaborate masturbation with a dream girl. Lonnie Garfield's *For Yourself*, dedicated to female sexual fulfillment through self-stimulation, was not only published on Valentine's Day by Doubleday last year but was chosen by the Book-of-the-Month-Club as an alternate selection. In the same vein, the *New York Review of Books* recently featured an ad for *Masturbation: A Woman's Handbook*, "a book by women for women" featuring "beautiful sex drawings." I can only wonder if it was written by that San Francisco woman who, according to an account in the *Berkeley Barb*, was not so long ago conducting a clinic in which her women clients were taught the ecstasies of vibrator-induced masturbation in one easy five-dollar lesson. All of which may suggest that we have kept in the closet too long (locked up there by the life-inhibiting biases of the Judeo-Christian morality) the most immediate and purest form of sexual fulfillment.

Masturbation as sexual fulfillment, apart from its occasional dependence on machinery, begins and ends in the self, is independent of complicating interpersonal communal and domestic involvements, and is thus simplicity itself. It might therefore be taken as a model for the popular salvational movement, especially since it is oriented to a greater intensity of life for the individual. EST, TM, AT, primal and encounter therapy—even when, like early Christian gnosticism, they claim to derive from special insights—all appeal because of the simplicity of their practical formulation and the speed with which they promise to get results for the private individual. EST is typical. Its founder, Werner Erhard, like the philosopher-mathematician René Descartes, not only had a spontaneous experience of the truth to begin with, but, also like Descartes, was able to ground his revelation in an electrifying simplicity. As one of his trainers puts it: "What is is and what ain't ain't" because "reality is simple, clear, black and white." Similarly, nothing could be simpler than a therapy that gets you off the psychiatric couch and onto the floor where you can scream your way out of your hang-ups. And what could be a simpler way to experience community than through participation in encounter or sensitivity groups, in which the sensations of interpersonal relations can be briefly and intensely enjoyed without any of the long-term commitments, perplexities, and encumbrances of normal communal life?

But what, for that matter, could be more clearly in the American cure-all tradition—which, if it was often high comedy in the commune movement, was just as often low comedy in the bitters-and-tonic industry that flourished throughout most of the 19th century? Products like Burdock Blood Bitters, Hooflander's German Bitters, Hooker's Wigwam Tonic, Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, Hartman's Pe-Ru-Na, and Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound promised quick results as a consequence of the simplest of techniques (swallowing something) and in terms no less totalistic than those employed by TM, EST, and AT. Pe-Ru-Na cured tuberculosis, pneumonia, Bright's disease,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

appendicitis, and heart trouble. Pinkham's Compound was an all-purpose feminine revivifier. Hostetter's Stomach Bitters cured dyspepsia, ague, dysentery, colic, and nervous prostration. Since most of these nostrums were heavily laced with alcohol (Hostetter's Bitters was nearly ninety proof, and Pinkham's Compound was twice as powerful as modern fortified wine) they could temper down moodswing as quickly as lithium does. Being highly regarded as virtuous substitutes for alcoholic beverages, they brightened the lives of many temperance advocates—not a few of whom, J. C. Furnas reports in *The Late Demon Rum*, died of alcoholism without being aware of ever having touched a drop. So they were ripped off the American Way—as, presumably, were those wistful utopians of Waldport, Oregon, who were recently persuaded by two mysterious strangers (retailers of cosmic Pe-Ru-Na) that they might very quickly depart by spaceship for a higher level of reality.

One might conclude, given our salvational impulse and the cultural conditions in which this impulse has been at work, that America has always had a high potential for developing freak-show caricatures of itself, that this potential is inseparable from its libertarian impulse, and that it will be realized in proportion as the culture speeds up, becomes more pluralistic and therefore more complicated. But what may look like a perverse effort to complicate life needs also to be seen as at least partly an effort to simplify life by reducing it to entertainment—a variety show in which the acts change so quickly that spectators are left only with the theme of a dazzling sequence of salvational events, no one of which is especially significant by itself. What non-believer can take Dr. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church seriously when it is being played over again, and in effect lampooned, by the Maharaj Ji's Divine Light Mission and Dixieland neo-Voodoo? The *National Observer* estimates that there are in the country about five thousand such cults that claim between two and three million adherents. No doubt these figures include many of those currently pursuing quick salvation in the hundreds of communes scattered about the country. No doubt, too, the lot of them are expressive of what Harvard Professor Krister Stendahl has called "a genuine hunger for mystical and religious experience." At the same time, however, they make up a rich national divertissement that counteracts the boredom that is the occupational hazard of an affluent and option-rich society.

Those who wonder why amidst so much salvational effort there is so little national sense of achieved salvation do not understand that in contemporary circumstances diversion is itself a form of salvation, and that nothing is simpler as a way of life than an openness to the possibility of being repeatedly born again. "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!" wrote the very complicated author of *Walden*. "I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand. . . ." But when your affairs are as two or three you are likely to be faced not with an infinity of possible salvations, any one of them available in disposable containers for quick use, but with your basic problems. Thoreau had in mind the undistracted life, the deliberate pace of which is correlative with a scarcity of options. But in America at the end of the 20th century distractions are a guarantee that life is available in all its abundance. Governor Bradford's strangers seem to have gotten a message somewhat like that while they were still on the high seas and America was only a blank check each of them was eager to fill out in his own terms.

But more than that. The love affair with simplicity in Western civilization, let alone in America, is a dangerous one. It leads one to believe that virtue and evil are existentially disjunctive, intended in the order of things to dwell apart from one another, as they were conceived to be by the gnostics. In this view evil is "out there" or "in the others" or in the institutions that both structure and contaminate our lives, so that it can be thought of as isolatable. As a consequence, it is easy to think of the pursuit of salvation as an uncomplicated and speedy affair, a matter of separating the dross from the gold.

In "Earth's Holocaust" Nathaniel Hawthorne subjected this gnostic impulse to the same irony that he not too much later directed against the Brook Farm experiment, in which one of his assignments was the community manure pile. In this cautionary fable the impatient party of salvation determines to dispose of the world's "accumulation of worn out trumpery" with a worldwide busking, or bonfire. To this fire zealous reformers bring everything that has ever in any context been accused of impeding the establishment of unadulterated virtue: creature comforts, art works, literature, political and religious emblems, munitions, torture devices, marriage certificates, money, legal documents, and business contracts. A young zealot cries: "Let mankind always do the highest, kindest, noblest thing that, at any given period, it has attained the perception of; and surely that thing cannot be wrong nor wrongly timed." Hawthorne's own conclusion is more complicated: "How sad a truth, if truth it were, that man's age-long endeavor for perfection had served only to render him the mockery of the evil principle, from the fatal circumstances of an error at the very root of the matter."

America itself in one of its aspects is a grand busking ceremony in which the corrupting trumperies of the old world are thrown into the flames with the expectation that they will be permanently disposed of. Indeed, the impulse to the salvational busk (or its metaphorical equivalent, the salvational bloodbath) is apparently an ineradicable element in the American character. You can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hear it in Jefferson's famous letter to Colonel Smith, in which, referring to Shay's Rebellion, he says: "God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. . . . What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." Most recently the impulse was expressed in the (often quite literal) buskings and bloodlettings of the revolutionary Left and in the counterculture's efforts to live out the conviction that it is possible to disengage oneself quickly and totally from the trumperies of the "bad" America so that life may be all virtue and freedom.

The spirit of the busk (more than a little troubled, it should be noted) is also a factor in Ed Sanders's *The Family*, his account of the Manson affair. What he has to say about Haight-Ashbury's 1967 summer of love-ins, be-ins, and share-ins suggests Marcia Seligson's true-believer account of EST in *Cosmopolitan* no less than the advertisements for Hostetter's Stomach Bitters: "Potentially, flower-power was one of the most powerful forces of change ever seen in recent history." It was "a noble experiment" and "the politics of free." But evil came in from outside and ruined the great good thing, just as Manson's family carried forward the great good thing of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters and made it evil. The very American thing about Sanders's book—the thing that makes it a better document than Vincent Bugliosi's later and factually superior *Helter Skelter*—is its often touching but always naive bewilderment as its author discovers evil where it ought not to have been and at work in ways he cannot account for.

THREE hundred years ago Cotton Mather, being a great Puritan divine and therefore knowing where evil came from, was spared this bewilderment. He records in his spiritual diary:

> I was once emptying the *Cistern of Nature*, and making Water at the Wall. At the same Time, there came a *Dog*, who did so too, before me. Thought I: "What mean, and vile things are the Children of Men. In this Mortal State! How much do our *natural Necessities* abase us, and place us in some regard, on the same Level with the very Dogs!"
>
> My thought proceeded. "Yet will I be a more noble Creature; and at the very time, when my *natural Necessities* debase me into the Condition of the Beast, my *Spirit* shall (I say, at that *very Time*!) rise and soar, and fly up, toward the Employment of the *Angel*."

This of course will no longer do. Mather, it is convenient and necessary for most of us to believe, is part of what the sons of Governor Bradford's strangers burned up in their own efforts to rise and soar. Beast and Angel have been disjoined for us, just as they are in Ed Sanders's book and just as they were for John Noyes's Oneidans. We can believe that either alone will save us; we can even believe that if we pursue the Beast vigorously and honestly enough the results will be somehow angelic. But if we have to believe that Hawthorne's "root of the matter" is the coexistence in us of Beast and Angel, then all our dreams of quick salvation will become pipe dreams and we will be left in that sobering and problem-heavy position, not of holding hands with angelic flower children, but of making water at the wall with Cotton Mather's dog.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Philosophy, Religion & Harry Wolfson

Leon Wieseltier

WHEN Harry Austryn Wolfson died in September 1974 at the age of eighty-seven, he left behind him a reputation for personal and professional eminence that bordered on legend. As professor of the history of philosophy at Harvard University—where he was known as Harvard's "resident sage"—Wolfson had become universally recognized as one of the greatest scholars of his generation. In a body of work which spanned over half a century, he erected what is certainly among the most subversive interpretations ever offered of the philosophical development of the West. This achievement, a propitious alliance of penetrating critical acumen and intimidating erudition, was, however, much more than merely a stunning contribution to the history of a discipline: it amounted, in fact, to a daring new lease on Western thought. Wolfson's work has had implications for intellectual and cultural historians, for philologists and historians of religion, for philosophers of religion and theologians.

As an author and teacher Wolfson raised the discussion of the history of ideas to new and distinguished heights, not only of intellectual probity, but of intellectual concern as well. When still a young man he came to his academic career as much out of a commitment to help clarify and resolve the crisis of contemporary Judaism as by his almost instinctive love of learning, and never afterward during his extensive labors in the academy did he lose sight of his larger purpose. Deeply cognizant of the quandaries of attempting to articulate a Jewish identity in an open and non-Jewish secular society, Wolfson believed and taught that the necessary condition of any religious or cultural position was knowledge: the blurred meaning of the present could be focused only by a fastidious consciousness of the past. He is among that handful of Jewish scholars in our time—men like Gershom Scholem, Saul Lieberman, and Salo Baron—who have altered the understanding of Jewish tradition by liberating its ancient and medieval episodes from the dross of ideology and neglect, and made it accessible and compelling to their contemporaries. This Wolfson accomplished not only in his published works and in his teaching—he was renowned as a man of infinite kindness and understanding—but likewise in his active participation and support of such institutions as the American Academy for Jewish Research. In this and other capacities, Wolfson was a founding father of Jewish studies in America.

Wolfson possessed an essential confidence that Judaism was still a match for these times, and every detail of his intricate work bespeaks a traditional religious intention. But Wolfson himself was a complicated man, the conflicted product of two antagonistic cultures and the trenchant critic of both. In Wolfson's attempt to translate tradition in an epoch wholly uncongenial to it, tradition did not quite survive intact. Herein lies the dramatic resonance of Wolfson's life and work: not only because of his commanding position in the general intellectual community, but also because in his person he broaches some of the most pressing issues of Judaism in modernity, the case of Harry Wolfson deserves close and sympathetic scrutiny.

WOLFSON was born in Byelorussia in 1887. He received his early education at the famous yeshivah of Slobodka, and the rigorous training of the yeshivah persists in the analytic cast of his writings. As a young man he emigrated to the United States, and took his B.A. at Harvard in 1911. (His first published paper, a study of the attitudes of Moses Maimonides and Judah Halevi toward Greek philosophy, was a prize-winning undergraduate essay.) For the next two years he held a traveling fellowship, and while in Europe undertook to exhume and examine the abandoned troves of Hebrew manuscripts in the libraries of Paris, Munich, Vienna, Parma, the Vatican, the British Museum, Oxford, and Cambridge. The arduous philological and textual work of those years, pioneering labors in identification, annotation, and comparison, laid the foundations for the magisterial scholary edifice to follow. "The study of a text is always an adventure," he wrote shortly afterward; "there is sleuthing in scholarship as there is in crime." The young detective took his doctorate at Harvard in 1915—Josiah Royce and George Foot Moore were among his examiners—and subsequently joined the Harvard faculty. Ten years later he was appointed to the new chair in Hebrew Literature and Philosophy

LEON WIESELTIER, whose criticism has appeared in COMMENTARY and other periodicals, is studying philosophy at Balliol College, Oxford, as a Kellett Fellow.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

established by Nathan Littauer, a position which he occupied until his retirement in 1958.

Wolfson's forceful scholarly will and imagination—he was hardly Henry Adams's docile Harvar type—quickly placed and thereafter kept him in the front ranks of the academic world. The scope and authority of his scholarship were dazzlingly established by his first work, *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle* (1929), a classic model of textual study and a seminal work of Jewish scholarship in this century. This prodigious debut was followed by *The Philosophy of Spinoza* (1934); *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (1947); and *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (1956). *The Philosophy of the Kalam,* a product of twenty-five years of persistent labor at the most corrupt and refractory texts he ever faced, will be published posthumously. These works, all of them signal contributions to their own historically and philosophically disparate fields, comprise a larger unity, which Wolfson entitled *The Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza,* a highly original reconstruction of the history of philosophy.

To grasp the design of an undertaking such as this, one must have a sense of how utterly foreign the style and content of late ancient and medieval philosophy are to the 20th-century mind. Unlike modern philosophy, in its willingness to rest content with small truths definitively apprehended, medieval and late ancient philosophy is thought on a grand scale, dedicated to describing the essential nature of God, man, and the world, to arriving at ultimate truths. And in contrast to modern philosophers, for whom the beginning of wisdom is the workaday clarity and familiarity of common speech, medieval philosophers, in accordance with their conception of themselves as the vanguard of the religious spirit, cultivated a certain inaccessibility. Medieval philosophy draped itself in an argument-studded style, a meticulous and hermetic code that under the name of scholasticism has become synonymous with impenetrability, hair-splitting detail, and a general reluctance to oblige the common reader. (Modern philosophy becomes similarly rough-going only as it approaches or subsists within the domain of formal and mathematical logic.) Finally, unlike the contemporary philosopher who believes that a philosophical problem is, like logical truth, ahistorical, and does not necessarily require a chronicle of previous opinions for its unraveling, the medieval philosopher worked within a philosophical ambience circumscribed on all sides by sacred texts, whether they were those of Aristotle or those of the Old and/or New Testaments. The medieval philosopher was bound not only by the truths of these texts but by their canonical authority, and his own work was in that respect the work of exegesis and commentary.

Late ancient and medieval philosophy does not yield its secrets easily; the explorer must be indefatigable, and come very well equipped. When Wolfson arrived on the scene, not much adequate equipment was available; it was he who, like a kind of archeologist, dug down by hand to the treasures below. "There is an earthly basis to the development of philosophic problems in the Middle Ages," Wolfson wrote, "and that is language and text." Wolfson excavated this earthly basis with a sophisticated method of relentlessly precise reading, according to which a term is analyzed in all its literal and implied meanings and its various strands of historical influence are separated out and identified. In archeological fashion, the scholar in Wolfson's view seeks to arrive at the most primitive signification of any given term or idea, and in this search he leaves no stone unturned. Wolfson called his method "the hypothetico-deductive method of text-interpretation," and explained that "it is nothing but the application of the scientific method to the study of texts."

In truth it is also nothing but the talmudic method of exegesis, a scrupulous procedure which analyzes the tantalizingly elliptical dicta of the rabbis in order to determine, in one of Wolfson's favorite phrases, "the latent processes of their reasonings." This method, known as *pilpul,* reached its perfect and most penetrating form precisely in the Lithuanian *yeshivot* where Wolfson was first trained. The Israeli scholar Gedalyahu Alon has observed of it:

> The *pilpulistic* method of study commonly used in the Lithuanian *yeshivot* consisted of a classification of *halakhic* terms and an analysis of their fundamental characteristics. This was necessary to distinguish between texts which appeared to be similar but were, in fact, contradictory. It also enabled the students to analyze various details of many scattered and complex *halakhot,* to join them together and establish general rules.

This is exactly the spirit of Wolfson's method. The text, approached in an attitude of respect bordering on reverence, is the final arbiter of interpretative validity: however fresh or convenient the scholar's suggestion, it must, like the scientific proposition it purports to be, constantly submit to the experimental trial of compatibility with the text.

Underlying such an exhaustive approach is an exegetical article of faith in the purposiveness of language. For Wolfson there is nothing fortuitous in a text—every term, reference, and illustration has been chosen by the author intentionally, both *for what it says and for what it does not say,* and this plenitude of meaning it is the scholar's responsibility to fathom and articulate. In this respect Wolfson's attitude toward language bears a striking resemblance to Freud's view of the language of his patients, whose "colloquial speech," Freud says, "is certainly no matter of chance but the deposit, as it were, of ancient knowledge." Similarly, Wolfson tells us that "statements are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not significant for what they actually affirm but for the denials which they imply; words in general, by the very limitation of their nature, conceal one's thought as much as they reveal it . . . they are nothing but floating buoys which signal the presence of submerged unuttered thoughts." Like the psychoanalyst, the scholar is engaged in the decoding of what Wolfson calls a "system of mnemonic symbols," and the end of both disciplines is the same: the disclosure of a meaning that is already there.

Wolfson's method is, then, a scholar's empiricism—"Let us set sail on some *Beagle* of our own in search of philosophic specimens . . . let us study their internal structures . . . let us try to learn something about the origin and classification of their species"—and its success is amply demonstrated in his books as well as in the scores of authoritative papers, many of them of monograph length, which he published over the years. Wolfson's study of Crescas, for example, enlisted all his immense powers as a philologist, translator, and interpreter against the notoriously recondite text of that late 14th-century Jewish philosopher, and the result is a clear and complete explanation of everything from the terminological origins of Crescas' theory of magnetism to his place in the intellectual revolution of the Renaissance. Wolfson's next project, the amplification of the terse and suggestive language of Spinoza's *Ethics*—an idiom ironically as succinct and elusive as that of the rabbis themselves—was detailed almost to a fault, and for its comprehensiveness proved to be at once a history of medieval Jewish philosophy as well. These two works, together with his *Philo* and his many classic papers on Maimonides, Halevi, and Saadia, are a trove of critical research for future students of medieval philosophy.

II

Indeed, the fruits of Wolfson's analytic method go beyond explication to interpretation and critical synthesis. Spinoza's *Ethics*, the subject of Wolfson's first full-length study, is as expansive and abstruse a work as the medieval tradition to which Spinoza fell heir. The story of Spinoza's life is well known. Educated within the Jewish community of 17th-century Amsterdam —Rembrandt's Amsterdam—the brilliant young Spinoza began posing questions about the nature of religious faith which bespoke an unhealable philosophical estrangement from Judaism. Private doubt soon became public conflict—the Jews of Amsterdam, still smarting from the scars of the Spanish and Portuguese expulsions and eager to please their watchful Dutch hosts, reacted to the maverick in their midst with ostracism and, eventually, excommunication. The banished Spinoza then translated his Hebrew name Baruch into its Latin equivalent Benedict, and left the house of his fathers for the fatherland of philosophy, where only universal truth would command his allegiance. The *bête noire* of the traditionally pious, Spinoza became the inspiration, almost the patron saint, of many a future freethinker.

Yet Spinoza also remains a thinker about whom everyone speaks but whom few understand: it is doubtful that many of his accusers or his disciples ever sweated through the gnomic works themselves. This is what Wolfson set out to do in his lengthy and methodical study, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*. What, he asked, was so audaciously new in Spinoza; wherein lay the precise philosophical content of his heresy? Wolfson's answer is simple: "The truth which was established by the daring of Spinoza was the principle of the unity of nature." For the religious philosophers of the Middle Ages, the unity of nature is broken by both the freedom of God and the freedom of man. However deeply the medievals may have felt the "logical anomaly of asserting the uniformity of the laws of nature, on the one hand, while on the other hand, asserting the autonomy of man within nature and the suzerainty of God over nature . . . all they did toward overcoming this difficulty was to try and patch it up somehow, never daring to cross the boundaries set up by tradition. It was Spinoza who first dared to cross these boundaries, and by the skillful use of weapons accumulated in the arsenal of philosophy itself he succeeded in bringing both God and man under the universal rule of nature and thus establishing its unity." This was Spinoza's redirection of philosophy, says Wolfson, and his affront to the religious tradition.*

Wolfson's next major work, *Philo*, treated of still another Jew adjusting to the intellectual pressures of a variegated non-Jewish reality, but his subject this time was a preacher who turned to philosophy not to undermine but to accommodate Judaism to it. Very little is known of Philo's life. He appears to have been born around the year 20 B.C.E. in Alexandria, and as late as 40 C.E. was a member of a delegation to Rome petitioning the Emperor Caligula to relax the harsh treatment of Alexandria's Jews. He is also known to have authored an apologetic tract defending his fellow Jews against charges leveled by one Apion. But perhaps the most significant thing about Philo's life was the sheer fact of where he lived, the melting pot that was Alexandria in the twilight of the Hellenistic world. Alexandria was in those years a chaotic and florid welter of all sorts of North African, Mediterranean, and Levantine cultures, and the Jews who lived in that exotic world were people in whom

* Spinoza's affront to Judaism did not stop there. In his other major work, the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, Spinoza fathered the higher criticism of the Bible, denied that revelation is a source of truth, advocated the divorce of philosophy from religion, and, most importantly perhaps, formulated for the first time the fateful ideal of a secular state in which religious conviction would be entirely the individual's private affair. This challenge was in many respects much graver than the cerebral pantheism of the *Ethics*, but lies beyond the scope of Wolfson's interest. For an admirable treatment of it, see Milton Himmelfarb's "Varieties of Jewish Experience," COMMENTARY, July 1967.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

religious piety underwent constant assault by an attractive assortment of Greek philosophies, Egyptian popular religions, and Hellenistic mysteries.

The paucity of biographical detail about Philo is amply compensated for by the generous number of his works which have survived. Philo's texts are almost entirely exegetical in method—he develops his arguments in the form of commentaries on various scriptural episodes such as the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, the lives of Moses, of Joseph, of Abraham, etc. As in most homiletical literature, Philo's style is hortatory, effusive, occasionally repetitive, more concerned to make itself understood than to score conceptual points. The obstacle to the student is not the language, however, which is comparatively clear, but the plethora of images, metaphors, and illustrations drawn largely from the extravagant, mixed, and lost world of Hellenism. Wolfson's book unpacks these allusions, identifies them historically, and clarifies their meaning, disentangling the Philonic pastiche into its various component parts. Again, Wolfson asks his favorite question: what is new in Philo? His answer: the joining of Greek thought to Scripture, resulting in religious philosophy as we know it from the ancient world until the birth of modern thought in the 17th century, with Spinoza.

WOLFSON's ensuing works were concerned not so much with individual thinkers as with schools or periods of thought—the Church Fathers, the Kalam, medieval Jewish philosophy. They are all models of virtuoso scholarship, of luminous explanation, but in them all Wolfson was aiming at something more than sustained clarification. *The Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza* is a highly original and provocative reconstruction of the entire history of philosophy.

The general pattern of that history as Wolfson understands it was elaborated by him in *Philo* roughly as follows. Philosophy begins, needless to say, in Greece, but it takes its most crucial turn in 1st-century Alexandria, with Philo's dramatic joining of Greek thought to Scripture for the first time. The religious philosophy which Philo concocted, according to which religion was "a certain set of inflexible principles, of a decidedly revealed origin, by which philosophy, the product of erring human reason, had to be tested and purged and purified," consisted of the systematic treatment of such problems as the relation of faith to reason (here the allegorical method of Scriptural interpretation is pressed into service); prophecy; creation; causality, miracles, and free will; and ethics and religious law—it was, in short, a system profoundly medieval in letter and spirit. It was from Philo that the Church Fathers learned this synthesis, and they in turn transmitted it to the Kalam (early medieval Islamic philosophy), whence it matured into its most rigorous and sophisticated formulation in the full flowering of medieval philosophy, particularly in Maimonides. From this height it was, by way of Crescas' devastating arguments, entirely razed by Spinoza, who turned the hard logic of the medievals against them and opened an unbridgeable chasm which proved fatal to the venerable synthesis of religion and philosophy.*

At first glance such a historical scheme seems curious indeed. Many philosophers and historians have pointed to antiquity for the deepest and most definitive articulation of philosophy—we may recall Alfred North Whitehead's remark that all of Western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato—and have accepted Greek terms as their criteria of philosophical and historical interpretation. Others, notably Hegel, have insisted that, on the contrary, "it is the latest, most modern, and newest philosophy that is the most developed, richest, and concrete." Wolfson's is the surprising perspective of the middle, the organization and evaluation of the history of philosophy under a medieval aspect. In his analysis, Philo and Spinoza assume decisive importance precisely in their capacities as parameters of the medieval tradition; Philo is understood in terms of what came after and Spinoza in terms of what came before. Greek philosophy is also considered in a predominantly adumbrative role—Plato and Aristotle are examined for such distinctively medieval issues as the unity and incorporeality of God, or the eternity of matter and creation *ex nihilo*. (A huge work on Greek philosophy exists among the many unpublished writings which Wolfson left at his death.) And modern thinkers such as Leibniz, Hume, and Mill are likewise explicated in terms of their development of medieval opinions.

How persuasive is Wolfson's winding chain of philosophical development? Certainly its most speculative link is its first one, the grandiloquent claim made for Philo. In *Philo*, Wolfson undertook to write about one of the most arcane and evasive figures in the history of philosophy. Unlike the punctiliously systematic writings of the medievals and Spinoza, thinkers whose avowedly methodical intentions justified Wolfson's confidence in their ultimately logical structure and development, Philo's texts—all thirteen volumes of them—are ruminative sermons delivered for instruction in the synagogue. They are not arguments but highly imaginative descriptions, exegetical forays into an opulent mystical cosmology. Wolfson, however, boldly declared that Philo was "a philosopher in the grand manner," the first great exponent of what became, with very little overhauling, medieval philosophy. Almost impudently Wolfson dubbed the entire medieval tradition "Philonic." Not everyone was convinced. Erwin Goodenough, the dean of all students of Hellenism, concluded, for example, that "the systematically organized mind in Wolfson's *Philo* seems to be the mind of Wolfson, not of Philo himself."

* Like Etienne Gilson in his study of Descartes, Wolfson has thus simultaneously demonstrated the medieval wellsprings of modern thought.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Whether or not the characterization of medieval philosophy as Philonic withstands critical scrutiny, there are other weaknesses in Wolfson's inveterate medievalizing. Much of modern philosophy, for example, falls beyond the reach of such a perspective; to describe 18th- or 19th-century thought as "post-Philonic" is not really to say very much about it. Wolfson's assertion that "while it is to be granted that the climate is different, the storms and thunderings and lightnings are the same" misses what is so unnervingly new about the disparagement of religion in modernity.

Yet none of this is meant to imply that Wolfson's reconstruction is merely a historian's eccentricity. There is a philosophical premise to his historiographical plan. At the ground of his revisionism is a prior, almost theological, axiom—that philosophy acquired its deepest meaning in its encounter with religion, and that the most penetrating comprehensions of the philosophic mind are achieved when an instinctive naturalism is corrected by the requirements of theistic faith. The periodization of the history of philosophy from the perspective of the medieval synthesis is at bottom the consideration of movements of thought in terms of their relation to revealed religion. Despite the heroic conceptual and methodological strides of the ancients, philosophy for Wolfson remained impoverished and incomplete until it acknowledged transcendent reality. Wolfson the historian is himself very much a votary of the "double-faith" theory he illuminates in his works, the theory according to which truth is a collaboration of revelation and reason.

III

The historiographical *idée fixe* of Wolfson's writings must be viewed, then, not as a stiff and coercive periodic classification but as itself a philosophical affiliation. Both the paganism of the ancients and the skepticism of the moderns ring hollow for Wolfson before the infinitely more resonant marriage of philosophy and religion exemplified by the medievals. But there is more to Wolfson's position than this. If, for him, medieval tradition, medieval culture, is the fulcrum of Western intellectual history, the central place in medieval culture itself is held by the Jews. Not only did a Jew, Philo, inaugurate the medieval tradition, and another Jew, Spinoza, end it, but medieval Jewish philosophy was its finest flower. As Wolfson put it in an early essay: "Medieval philosophy is one philosophy, written in three languages, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin, and among these Hebrew holds the central and most important position." It is the emphasis on the centrality of Jewish thought which makes Wolfson's work, in addition to being a major contribution to scholarship, a significant chapter in modern Jewish intellectual history.

Modern Jewish scholarship was founded in the early decades of the 19th century as a weapon in the social and political struggles of the Jews in Western Europe. The gradual, sobering realization that the secularization of the European states had left intact the Christian character of European culture, and that political emancipation alone was not going to abolish the marginality of Jews to that culture, motivated scholars like Leopold Zunz, Abraham Geiger, and Heinrich Graetz to assert the historical legitimacy of the Jewish tradition before a skeptical European intelligentsia. The sanguine universalism of these scholars was brutally belied by subsequent history, as virulent anti-Semitism arose in the very countries in which their discipline, *Jüdische Wissenschaft*, had flourished. Disillusionment was followed by the growth of a mass movement, Zionism, devoted to the affirmation of Jewish life and culture. A mounting Jewish confidence became the climate for Jewish scholarship in this century. The new generation of scholars, disabused of what Gershom Scholem called "those infinitely yearning and furtive glances" at European culture, came motivated instead by a kind of pride in the sources themselves, whether that pride was "religious," national-cultural, or overtly Zionist in kind. To this generation Harry Wolfson belonged. Both the method and substance of his work formidably challenge not only the dependence of Jewish thought upon its Christian milieu, but, in a sort of counter-offensive, the Christian interpretation of Christian intellectual history itself. The real critical thrust of Wolfson's work is toward a reassessment of the place of Judaism within Western culture.

Wolfson himself confessed to his motivations in a series of articles which appeared in 1921 in the *Menorah Journal*:

> Once, in a great library, I was walking through the narrow aisles between long rows of bookshelves stocked with the works of the Church writers. Every great thinker of the Church whose teachings helped to mold Christian thought and tradition was represented there by his writings. . . . Hundreds upon hundreds of volumes, the choicest products of the printer's art of Venice, Basel, Leipzig, Paris, and Rome, bound in pigskin and morocco leather, with gilded backs and bronzed corners, all were gathered together, standing there in the open shelves, offering themselves for use and for study. And looking at that wealth of magnificent volumes, I thought of those shabby tomes which incarnate the spirit of Saadia, Halevi, and Maimonides, of those unpublished works of Gersonides, Narboni, and the Shem-Tobs, scattered all over the world and rotting in the holds of libraries; and I was overcome by that feeling of sadness and sorrow which to our forefathers was ever present throughout their exiled life amid the foreign splendor of European cities. . . .

Wolfson was moved to study by pain, but his campaign was one of revival, of rediscovery, of scholarly redress. In the name of "love and devotion to Judaism" he sought to break the centuries-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

old hold which Christian theology had upon historians of thought and culture.

In the modern age, the Christian understanding of the history of philosophy was nurtured under the aegis of Hegel, and it is with that singularly powerful opponent that Wolfson had to take issue. Hegel adheres completely to the Augustinian view that the life and teachings of Jesus are at the center of history—whatever came prior to Christianity is considered by him preparatory to it, and whatever existed outside of it is considered tributary to it. For Hegel, Christianity is a "revolution," "the regeneration of the world"; philosophically speaking, it is the first awakening of self-consciousness, the primal, self-impelled projection of consciousness away from the subjective immediacy of nature to the objective truth of spirit. Christianity is a decisive event in the history of mind, mind's very coming-of-age.

The history of philosophy is elaborated by Hegel in terms of this Christian touchstone. Greek philosophy, "which found its place in the religion of the heathen," registers the metaphysical achievements of Plato and the methodological achievements of Aristotle and concludes with the overcoming of the skeptical subjectivism of the Stoics and Epicureans by the proto-Christianity of Plotinus. (Philo, a "learned Jew," is consigned to the wings of this scenario.) Medieval and modern philosophy are both already "within Christendom," and are subsumed beneath the rubric of the Christian idea. Philosophy is eventually realized with the "Teutonic" delineation of philosophical and historical self-consciousness in German idealism. As for medieval thought, it is for Hegel still very much a child of the Dark Ages; scholasticism is strongly condemned for deflecting the Christian campaign for actualized spirit into a maze of picayune and lifeless abstractions, and Jewish and Islamic philosophy is summarily dismissed as "to be noticed only in an external and historic way." The Jews and Arabs are important only as transmitters of Aristotle to the Christian West.

This denigration of the innovative richness of Jewish and Muslim thinkers survived among later historians of philosophy (like Bertrand Russell) who were perhaps oblivious to its decidedly Christian prejudice. Yet Wolfson had studied the Jewish and Islamic works themselves, and not only enthusiastically endorsed their philosophical competence and originality, but insisted further that they were, in fact, the pivot upon which the entire history of philosophy turns. They are at the summit of medieval philosophy—and medieval philosophy is at the summit of philosophy itself. What was transmitted to the Christians was not merely Aristotle, but a painstaking record of the juxtaposition of Aristotle with religious faith. Wolfson's implied critique of Christian scholasticism is not that it is abstract or incorrect, but, more devastatingly, that it is, in all its essential features (save such uniquely Christian problems as the philosophical implications of the Trinity), derivative. The Alexandrian moment in the history of philosophy was crucial—but in its Philonic form: it was Philo, the "learned Jew," who founded two millennia of thought, not the ecstatic Plotinus who is central for Hegel but in Wolfson's scheme remains only a chapter in the history of Platonism.*

But what is one to make of an interpretation of Christian thought—indeed, of ecclesiastical thought—which insists that it is, at bottom, Jewish? Or of a view of Western intellectual history which finds its turning point in Philo, a Jewish preacher of 1st-century Alexandria, and its climax in Maimonides, a Jewish philosopher of 12th-century Fostat? Is not a Jewish philosophy of history as distorting as a Christian one? Wolfson's reconstruction, when pressed to its logical conclusions, would seem to imply that the Christian cast of Western thought—a virtual tautology—is in some sense a peripheral quality, that the splendid edifice of Christian scholasticism is no more than a species of a Jewish philosophical genus. Although Wolfson's attitude toward Christian thinkers is in no way derogatory of their genius, like any historical account which aspires to exhaustive explanation, his at times falls victim to the dangers of reduction. Wolfson is occasionally unfair to the complexity of his subject by defining it solely in terms of origins. For example, he concludes each chapter of *Philo* with a tidy discussion of the "anticipations and influences" of Philo's various notions, but in many such cases of anticipation and influence it is not the similarity to but the difference from Philo that is philosophically interesting. Wolfson's work, that is, betrays the weaknesses of its own strengths: though the consciousness of Jewish origins can prove a forceful corrective of ideological pretensions to exclusiveness, it is itself sometimes flawed by simplification.

IV

WOLFSON'S aims as a historian, however, must not be confused with his own personal position as a believing Jew: it is a confusion of which he himself was never guilty. His illumination of the Jewish origins of Christian thought was meant to erase a long-standing factual error and the excesses of a historiography that would have made that error indelible; it is ultimately an expression of the real philosophical unity of Western religious experience. Still, his

* Since Christian historiography considered Platonism the mainstream for the development of philosophical ideas, it is not surprising that Wolfson's strategy as a historian is primarily an "Aristotelian" one, the attempt to present Hellenistic and medieval intellectual history against the background of Aristotle. Many of his most daring, and sometimes unconvincing, leaps of interpretation—such as his treatment of Philo's groundbreaking *logos*—are risked in this attempt. Beyond its polemical implications, it is also possible to see in this fluency with the Aristotelian tradition the response of a sensibility spawned in the Lithuanian ambience toward a temper of mind more congenial than the intuitive and emotional flights of Platonism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exposé must inevitably mean something special to the Jewish reader, and even more so to the Jewish scholar. For Wolfson, the general historian who neglects the Hebrew and the Arabic because of a personal commitment to the Latin, knowingly or otherwise, is guilty of violating the first principle of scholarship. But the *Jewish* scholar who uncritically accepts such a reading is culpable not only as a scholar but as a Jew: his ignorance of the relations among Jewish, Islamic, and Christian culture amounts to an exercise in intellectual self-effacement.*

The problem of Jewish identity in a non-Jewish environment was one that exercised Wolfson all his life. "We are gradually drifting," he wrote many years ago, "toward an uncritical adulation of Christianity at the expense of our esteem for Judaism."

> It is a fact of common observation that many educated Jews entertain a Christian point of view in their historical estimate of Judaism, Christianity, and their relations. The cause of this is not far to seek. They absorb it with the rest of their knowledge from books written by Christians; they accept it as uncritically and indisputably true. In part this condition can be combated by the publication of scholarly works setting forth the Jewish view on all such controversial matters.

What was, then, a historical discovery of no mean interest to the general historian was simultaneously, for Wolfson, a polemic of liberating relevance for the Jew enmeshed in cultural assimilation.

Wolfson optimistically suggests that it is possible for traditional Judaism to attain creative heights even within the confines of a foreign culture, and that a Jew may critically absorb the greatest achievements of his host culture without putting his Judaism into question. This issue is most clearly drawn in his interpretation of Hellenistic Judaism and of Philo. Erwin Goodenough maintained that Philo's thought represented but one manifestation of a prevailing Hellenistic mystery religion, "predominantly an expression of . . . the Greek genius as it survived in the Hellenistic world." Wolfson contested the validity of this interpretation, for its implicit downgrading of the Jewish dynamic in Philo and for its suggestion that the effect of external cultural influence on the Jews is inevitably to alienate them from Judaism:

> With the example of Scripture before them [the Jews] were not afraid to make use in the description of their own religion of terms used in the description of other religions, but whatever common terms they used, the difference was never blurred for them between truth and falsehood in religious belief and right and wrong in religious worship.

To describe cultural influence as alienation is, for Wolfson, to miss the flexibility and absorptive capacity of the Jewish tradition, a flexibility most tellingly demonstrated by medieval Judaism and one which Philo first brought to the fore. To be sure, not everyone in Jewish Alexandria discerned the Philonic strategy: even then, according to Wolfson, there was widespread apostasy, there were defections by "the weak of flesh," "the socially ambitious," and, most strikingly, "the intellectually uprooted." The colorful portrait which Wolfson paints of the Jewish community of Alexandria—one of the most fascinating and, unfortunately, least documented segments of his entire work—is, in effect, that of any Jewish community in an open and vibrant cultural environment; his Alexandria might as well be 19th-century Berlin or 20th-century New York. But within this teeming chaos of cultures there always remains Philo's alternative, that of incorporating foreign methods and insights into a Judaism sufficiently strong and cherished to contain them.

Wolfson's solution for the Jew in Western culture is, then, a kind of liberalism, but a liberalism with a difference—the liberalism of a protean tradition which knows its own strengths. Wolfson's optimism is based not on secular ideologies of universalism but upon the dynamic character of the Jewish tradition. And by positing Judaism as axiomatic, Wolfson's optimism aspires to a kind of cultural and religious realism as well. Jewishness is for him an ineluctable datum of experience; it would be as impossible for a Jew to do away with this social and cultural inheritance as to do away with a physical inheritance, and futile and self-destructive to try. Alienation is unnecessary, puerile, even pathological: maturity is acceptance and participation, the recognition of the spiritual and cultural limits of one's own existence.

An earlier historian of medieval Judaism, Israel Abrahams, categorically asserted in 1896 that "the Jewish nature does not produce its rarest fruits in a Jewish environment" —a faith in the Diaspora with which Wolfson's more candid optimism must not be confused. Yet that Abrahams could quite plausibly point to Philo, Maimonides, and Spinoza—Wolfson's own evidences—as proof of his assertion serves to highlight the possibly tenuous character of Wolfson's view of Jewish tradition. How legitimate is it to represent the center of the Jewish tradition by Philo, a mystic drenched in Hellenistic religion—an idolatry if there ever was one—and by Maimonides, a philosopher drenched in Aristotle? Even if the Maimonidean synthesis may in principle be regarded as Judaism *par excellence*, it was a synthesis that was hardly accepted or internalized by the majority of the Jewish community. Wolfson's highly intellectualist view of Jewish tradition

* Wolfson's critical mantle has lately been picked up by Emil Fackenheim, who has sought to correct our understanding of modern philosophy precisely as Wolfson has corrected our understanding of medieval philosophy, and for similar reasons.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is not quite what most Jews mean and have meant by Jewish tradition.

This brings us finally to the sensitive question of the nature of the religious commitment which informs Wolfson's work—a question that in his lonely last years caused the aging scholar profound personal suffering. Wolfson never tired of insisting that Judaism's greatness should be sought in its Orthodox tradition. (He once called Reform Judaism, with its "excessive craving for modernity, formality, and respectability," a "disembodied ghost of a religion.") But at the same time there was in Wolfson the man, and in Wolfson the scholar, a deep ambivalence toward Orthodoxy. Wolfson had worked free of the distorting insecurities of apologetics, but for all his "national pride," and his passionate commitment to traditional Judaism, he may be said to have fallen victim to what is perhaps modernity's greatest disruption of Jewish thought—the tendency to ideologize Judaism, to defend it as essentially a world view, or feeling, or attitude, or creed.

TRADITIONAL Judaism has been separated out in the modern world into a dualism of theory and practice, but it is just such a distinction which Orthodoxy cannot abide. The Orthodox understanding of Judaism is of a pristine and indivisible unity of faith and practice. Jewish concepts are delineated and completed in the structure and content of Jewish law, and the practice of the law bestows upon these concepts their meaning and urgency. Alone, wrenched from their natural habitat of the commandments, they are characters in search of an author—they are only an ideology. There is one compromise which no liberalism, however armed with the *verstehen* of faith, can elicit from the Jewish tradition without asking it violently to transform itself—and that is the compromise of observance.

This is the compromise which Wolfson made. In a tone of self-irony—and certainly not without a touch of bitterness—Wolfson once called himself "a non-observant Orthodox Jew." His work reflects this self-description. What so engaged Wolfson in medieval Jewish philosophy was its metaphysics, its theories of creation and prophecy and natural law and providence, not its delineations of *halakhah* or its theories of the commandments. He set the medieval Jewish philosophers against a background of Greeks and of Hellenistic commentators of Aristotle, not of the Rabbis or the Geonim. He put Philo at the beginning. The ideological nature of his Orthodoxy is nowhere reflected more clearly in his scholarship than in his treatment of Maimonides: the *Guide of the Perplexed*, a work of theory, is raised to an indisputable centrality in Jewish (and Western) thought, but at the price of virtually the entire *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides' code of Jewish law.*

The medievals were wary of the impulse to codify Jewish dogma and to rationalize the commandments. No formulation of dogma in Judaism—and there were many—ever achieved canonical status, and as for the rationalization of the commandments, even Maimonides, for whom philosophical knowledge was the goal of human life, insisted that the abiding preconditions of such knowledge were the ritual, ethical, and social imperatives of the law. In this respect Wolfson did not approximate his medieval models—for him the philosophical profession of faith seemed a sufficient guarantee of the Jewish tradition. He was, then, very devotedly, but no more than, Orthodoxy's learned friend.

Wolfson the man could live neither with nor without the faith of his fathers. Tradition was in his blood, but he remained caught, even willingly caught, in the throes of secular modernity, which could not conquer but would not free him. This was his life's trap, but it was also the source of his greatest power as a critic and historian of philosophy, and it is the element in him that lends the story of his career its poignancy. In the last year or so of his life Wolfson used to give voice to a sense of disappointment and deep regret. He should, he said, have lived a life of observance, consistent with his most cherished convictions. He should have written his books in Hebrew. He had, he felt, amounted to less than the ideal which had inspired him in his youth when he wrote, "What is really necessary for our happiness, and even for our intellectual satisfaction, is an abiding sense of loyalty to one supreme interest and a willingness to resign ourselves to that loyalty." Yet this much is certain: had Wolfson in fact restricted himself to the homogeneous ideal of his youth, had he confined himself to the world of Orthodoxy alone, had he written his works in Hebrew, he would not have been Harry Wolfson. His conflict not only tormented him, it also defined him, and without its creative tension he would never have been able to speak so persuasively to Jews of non-Jews, to non-Jews of Jews. Above all, he would not have had the mature and daring vision which forced tradition's secrets out of its most perplexing texts and charged them to address modernity. Harry Wolfson loved the Jewish tradition in an exemplary way, and for this, too, his memory is blessed.

* Interestingly, the one-sidedness of Wolfson's treatment of Maimonides—a trait shared by almost all studies of Maimonides in this century and the last—has been challenged by his successor at Harvard, Isadore Twersky, who has persuasively demonstrated the integral unity of Maimonides' *halakhic* and philosophical thought.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Revisionist Literary Criticism

Irene H. Chayes

BARELY a quarter-century after hopeful observers hailed the beginning of an "age of criticism" and with it the reform in the study of literature long needed in American universities and graduate schools, academic thinking and writing about literature in the mid-1970's suffer from a division within that is as profound as the similar divisions elsewhere in contemporary society. On one side is the non-criticism of the great majority of doctoral dissertations, academic journal articles, and minor university press books that are written or published under the rubric of literature, although their subjects are as likely to be taken from the popular arts or "film" or the topical concerns of the season before last as from poetry and works of fiction. Included here are the uncertain publications issuing from the new socio-literary "studies" courses, which have been speedily recognized, funded, and staffed and now must find something to say about the literature categorized as their own. On the other side is what from an earlier standpoint could only be called anti-criticism, arising out of the many theoretical systems, from varieties of linguistics and semiology to a revived and transformed Marxism, which have been proliferating here as well as abroad and are coming to occupy the position of dominance once held by philology.

IRENE H. CHAYES, *a new contributor, has taught at the University of Maryland, SUNY, Binghamton, and elsewhere, and has published criticism in* Kenyon Review, Comparative Literature, *and other journals. She is currently writing a book on the graphic designs of William Blake.*

In the shrinking humanistic center, which it shares with what used to be considered conventional literary scholarship, literary criticism proper has been largely concerned during the past decade with defending its prerogatives and at the same time reacting against its predecessors, the New Critics and the New Critics' successor, Northrop Frye. The favorite target of reassessment and retrospective criticism, apparently because it was the nearest approach to theory in a predominantly empirical and pragmatic movement, is the one general aesthetic principle, the autonomy of a poem as a work of art, that was held openly or tacitly by all the New Critics. (Or as they are now likely to be called, after being so long identified with a book title rather than by an actual group name, "American Formalists." Frye too has been denaturalized, as a "Structuralist.") Historically, it is possible to see now, a belief in poetic autonomy reflected the more fortunate cultural situation in the 1930's and the 1940's, when the productions in all the arts from earlier in the century still exceeded, and eluded, the criticism available to deal with them. Most of the New Critics, too—in the classic list of Eliot, Empson, Ransom, Tate, Warren—were poets themselves and brought to the poetry of others their experiential knowledge of how a poem evolves. From their different standpoint, however, assuming the primacy of theory, the newer critics of the present have continued what has become almost a tradition by disputing the essays, first published in 1946, in which W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley tried to defend the principle of poetic autonomy by exposing the two most common critical errors of the time: "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy."*

Naive readers, including undergraduate students, used to find Wimsatt's and Beardsley's arguments too philosophical; now, by an ironic historical reversal, both the formulations of the critical fallacies and the principle they were designed to serve are made to appear philosophically naive and inaccurate as well. With great intellectual subtlety, Paul de Man† has argued that Wimsatt's anti-intentionalism was contradicted by the nature of his fellow critics' practice and was based on a misunderstanding of the "structure of literary form." De Man proposes instead a theoretical account of critical interpretation, adapted from Heidegger's notion of the "hermeneutic circle," in which there is no discontinuity between the author's act of composing a poem and the critic's act of interpreting it, and (by implication) the critic can never be mistaken. "Poetry is the foreknowledge of criticism. Far from changing or distorting it, criticism merely discloses poetry for what it is." Attacking from another direction, Stanley E. Fish** has turned the affective fallacy on its head and developed an "affective stylistics," according to which the reading experience requires of the literary

* Reprinted in Wimsatt's *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (1954). Simply stated, the point made by the two essays together was that the meaning of a poem is, or ought to be, independent of both its origins in the mind of the author and its results in the mind of the reader.

† "Form and Intent in the American New Criticism," in the author's *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 20-35.

** "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics," *New Literary History*, Autumn 1970, pp. 123-162. Fish's view is reflected in the titles of his books, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in "Paradise Lost"* (1967) and *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of 17th-Century Literature* (1972).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

work precisely what Wimsatt and Beardsley wanted to save it from—disappearance into the consciousness of the reader. To Fish, the text is not an entity in itself, with the unity and integrity of a physical object (a "dangerous illusion," he says), but what he elsewhere calls a "self-consuming artifact," designed to be used up in the "workings of its own best effects." (Both views are generally in accord with the position of Roland Barthes, to whom a separation between the critic and the writer and between the critical and creative acts is part of a "worn-out myth."*)

There is also an incidental stricture upon the critic in "The Affective Fallacy," as the authors note the ways in which affective theory had become "less a scientific [i.e., psychological] view of literature than a prerogative—that of the soul adventuring among masterpieces, the contagious teacher, the poetic radiator—a magnetic rhapsode Ion, a Saintsbury, a Quiller-Couch, a William Lyon Phelps." A record of the adventures of the soul among masterpieces was the critical ideal of Anatole France, which at the time Wimsatt and Beardsley were writing had degenerated into the empty punditry of their last three illustrations. It is Anatole France whose literary essays in the "personalist mode," along with those of Ruskin and Pater, are currently recommended by Geoffrey Hartman as models for the writing of criticism today. Although Hartman does not mention "The Affective Fallacy," he refers elsewhere to a "backlash" against Ruskin and Pater as well as France led by I. A. Richards, whose own style is rejected as a model because its "superstructure" is "the managerial imperative of what is now called Social Science." In his recent critical essays ("I. A. Richards and the Dream of Communication," "The Fate of Reading," "The Interpreter: A Self-Analysis")† Hartman seems to be mounting a counter-backlash in behalf of the subjective-impressionistic indulgences, as they once would have been considered, that were excluded from critical writing by the more austere followers of the New Criticism, those who took Wimsatt's and Beardsley's essays most to heart. Hartman now calls criticism an art form itself, and warns those who insist on reading critical prose "only literally" that too strong a "privileging" of literary, or fictional, or "primary" texts over literary-critical, or nonfictional, or "secondary" texts may "reify" literature to the point of disordering the ability to read.

Harold Bloom, Hartman's colleague at Yale, joins in exalting the 19th-century "personalist" essayists, Ruskin, Pater, and Wilde, and foresees an end to the separation between literature, or more specifically poetry, and criticism in more thoroughgoing fashion: "As literary history lengthens, all poetry necessarily becomes verse-criticism, just as all criticism becomes prose poetry." The principle of poetic autonomy is rejected by Bloom even as a guide to practical criticism. In place of "the failed enterprise of seeking to 'understand' any single poem as an entity in itself" he proposes an "antithetical criticism" which, in the terms of a new literary theory of his own, approaches the meaning of any particular poem only by way of a range of other poems, including not only those written by other poets but also the poem that might have been written by the historical author as an alternative, and the new poem the critic himself "writes" in the course of his reading.

THE particular critical positions that have been noted for de Man and Fish, Hartman and Bloom, are similar enough to indicate that in what remains of literary criticism as such, even without newer influences from outside, a revisionist movement has been under way for several years, directed not only against certain weaknessses of the New Criticism in matters of theory but also toward a changed conception of the critic and his function, which is potentially more important. The similarities are not accidental. It happens that all four authors—together with two others who should also be included, J. Hillis Miller and Angus Fletcher**—belong to a middle-generation group of scholar-critics so called, some of whom are more the one than the other, initially related by similar or overlapping specialties, common institutional affiliations, or the dates and places of their graduate degrees. The earliest among them were already too late for the direct impact of modernism, and late enough to know the New Criticism when it was at the height of its prestige, with its stronghold at Yale, where at different times during the 1950's and the early 1960's Hartman, Bloom, Fletcher, and Fish all were graduate students. Their chief influences instead during the 1950's (this is especially true of Hartman and Miller) were from the older European scholars, including distinguished refugees, who were in the United States and still actively teaching and publishing, such as René Wellek and Erich Auerbach at Yale and Leo Spitzer and Georges Poulet at Johns Hopkins. In varying degrees, the affinities of this group have continued to be with European criticism and its emphasis on theory, philosophically based, down to the present-day branches of Structuralism.

Although within their individual specialties the members of this group have been working independently, by their cross-relationships in other respects they have helped to create what is in effect a new canon in literary history, res-

---

* For a comparative account of the Anglo-American and French critical "schools" and of both in relation to Russian Formalism, see Edward Wasiolek's introduction to Serge Doubrovsky, *The New Criticism in France*, translated by Derek Coltman (University of Chicago Press, 1973); on the position of Barthes cited above, see pp. 7 and 30.

† Included in *The Fate of Reading and Other Essays*, University of Chicago Press, 1975, 352 pp., $15.00.

** For Miller, see *The Form of Victorian Fiction* (1968); for Fletcher, *Allegory, The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (1964). Major publications by Geoffrey Hartman before 1975 are *The Unmediated Vision: An Interpretation of Wordsworth, Hopkins, Rilke, Valéry* (1954); *André Malraux* (1960); *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814* (1964); and *Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays 1958-1970* (1970). Those by Harold Bloom are *Shelley's Mythmaking* (1959); *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (1961); *Blake's Apocalypse* (1963); *Yeats* (1970); *The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition* (1971).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

toring figures of the past—Spenser, Milton, the "poets of sensibility" of the later 18th century—who have long been eclipsed by the "modern classics" favored after Eliot. Harold Bloom has taken the lead in defining in place of both the older period structure and the assumption of a unique Modernism a central Romantic tradition in English poetry, stemming from Milton and continuing to the present; a native American branch begins with Emerson and culminates in Wallace Stevens, but Pound, Eliot, and Williams belong to a "rival school" which is excluded. For some years Bloom has been championing A. R. Ammons and John Ashbery as successors to Stevens.* Recently he has added a surprising third, the later Robert Penn Warren, who is welcomed into the American tradition in spite of his descent from Eliot and the "rival school."

If the co-founders of the new canon now seem to be forming a school of their own,† sharing ideas and terminology, quoting and reviewing each other, dedicating their books to each other in rotation, that in large part is the doing of the two most prolific members, Bloom and Hartman, who have been publicizing and drawing their associates along with them as they have drawn closer together in their explorations of the role of the critic; it is their emerging conception that represents the greatest change from the view bequeathed by the New Criticism. Their revisionist efforts in this respect are loosely coordinated in their latest series of books, from which all quotations earlier in this article have been taken. Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* was published in 1973, followed in 1975 by his *A Map of Misreading*, Hartman's *The Fate of Reading*, and Bloom's *Kabbalah and Criticism*; Bloom's *Poetry and Repression* was published in January 1976.** Hartman's prescription for a "personalist" criticism is limited to a few scattered sentences, among essays which illustrate his own personalism. For Bloom, in contrast, a revised conception of the critic is an essential part of the theory he has been developing and elaborating in the four books listed. Since the "theory of poetry" designated in the subtitle to *The Anxiety of Influence* changes markedly in the two subsequent books, the series will be considered in order of publication.

II

"INFLUENCE" in Bloom's sense is not the passing on of ideas or images from earlier to later writers, but a complex relationship between past and present that is the result of a more or less deliberate act of misreading, or "misprision," by a later writer (properly poet; Bloom does not give fiction a place in his theory) of the work of a strong precursor he is trying to evade. As the governing principle of post-Enlightenment poetry, which means all since the later 18th century, misprision is necessary, inevitable, but doomed to fail as a means of totally delivering the anxious poet from the effects of his belatedness. If he himself is strong, he struggles against influence; if he is weak, he is unaware of it or idealizes his precursor.

Bloom's theory was foreshadowed in his study of Yeats (1970) and among the essays collected as *The Ringers in the Tower* (1971). Its full development in *The Anxiety of Influence* brings together critical and scholarly influences from a number of precursors of Bloom's own, including the two critics he is most obviously trying to evade and supplant, Eliot and Frye. For some enthusiastic reviewers, his effort is successful; according to Morris Dickstein, this is "the most provocative and original piece of literary theory in English since Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*." For not a few other readers, both the plausibility of the theory and its value as criticism are overshadowed by its own literary qualities. There is an undeniable appeal in the style and format of the book: the parables that serve as prologue and epilogue; the many quotations and allusions interwoven with the author's arguments; the inspired eclectic names—"clinamen," "tessera," "kenosis," etc.—of the "revisionary ratios," or ways of misreading, under whose headings most of the discussion is organized; the sustained personal tone of an observer meditating on "the melancholy of the creative mind's desperate insistence upon priority." The greatest appeal and Bloom's greatest originality lie in his use of Freud, beginning from an analogy between the belated poet's struggle against a great precursor and the psychoanalytic "family romance." "The Internalization of Quest Romance" (1968), an essay included in *The Ringers in the Tower*, was an earlier experiment in the adaptation of Freudian concepts to literary history, which had nothing to do with the library psychoanalysis of individual writers. In *The Anxiety of Influence*, by what seems a legitimate extension of Freud, Bloom outlines a powerful cultural myth in which the activity of writing poems calls out instinctual psychic energies allowed little expression elsewhere in post-Enlightenment society, even within the seething 19th-century patriarchal family. The important new point he makes about the creative process, and in *The Anxiety of Influence* is able to hold in proper perspective, is that it can involve savage aggression and repression, threatening to both the humanity and the sanity of the poet if it is mishandled. An improved *study* of literature might be the foundation of a humanism, Bloom concedes; literature itself—the literature of his conception, poetry red in tooth and claw—never.

LIKE *The Anxiety of Influence* the two following books are slim volumes, published without conventional scholarly apparatus, but

* Ammons and Ashbery have been discussed by John Romano, "The New Laureates," COMMENTARY, October 1975.

† On the "Yale school" proper, which on campus comprises Bloom, Hartman, de Man, Miller, and now the "Deconstructionist" Jacques Derrida, see the conclusion of Miller's omnibus review in the *New Republic*, November 29, 1975, pp. 30-33. This review also indicates how much of present-day European theory already has been adopted by American academic critics.

** *The Anxiety of Influence*, Oxford University Press, 157 pp., $2.50 (paper); *A Map of Misreading*, Oxford University Press, 206 pp., $8.95; *Kabbalah and Criticism*, Seabury Press, 127 pp., $6.95; *Poetry and Repression*, Yale University Press, 293 pp., $11.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neither can be called that "severe poem" which Bloom in the first book indicated his antithetical criticism was to be. With considerable loss, he turns away from a primarily psychoanalytical model and from his own meditative point of view to become a confident, sophistical lecturer, anticipating and parrying hard questions that might be raised by his audience, delighting in taking positions that can be defended only by ingenuity and the force of will. Repeatedly restated, the theory of influence hardens into the formula of an impersonal literary determinism, in which there are no longer poets and poets, or poets and poems, but only texts and texts; in *Kabbalah and Criticism*, even the individual text is allowed no existence except as a synecdoche for "a larger whole containing other texts." A diagrammatic table inserted in *A Map of Misreading* sums up what similarly happens to the six original revisionary ratios when they are augmented by corresponding "psychic defenses," rhetorical tropes, and classes of Romantic imagery to form the map, a composite paradigm of misprision.

The announced purpose of *A Map of Misreading* is instruction in practical criticism, how to read a poem according to the theory introduced in *The Anxiety of Influence*, but Bloom's own performance destroys the credibility he was previously able to win by his tact in dealing with particular poems. The "roads" he follows now in his demonstrations ("Criticism is the art of knowing the hidden roads that go from poem to poem") are blasted ruthlessly through the chosen texts, often by sheer assertion. Although (compounding the metaphor) Bloom assures his readers in advance that his map is not a bed of Procrustes, that is precisely what it becomes in the most extreme instance, a comparison of two Romantic "crisis-poems," in which lines and images from Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" are forcibly equated not only with the abstractions of the map but also, item by quoted item, with particular lines and images of very different meaning in Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality." To Howard Nemerov (prescient, since he was reviewing only *The Anxiety of Influence**) Bloom's form is logic "but his essence is confusion." In *A Map of Misreading*, the confusion is created by the logic, for Bloom has done far better as a practical critic of the Romantic poets than his Procrustean torture of Shelley might suggest. If there is any lesson for the practical critic in this and other illustrations of antithetical criticism in action, it is the excluding one that to a map-reader of Harold Bloom's rationalizing and improvisatory powers any territory is interchangeable with any other; that moreover, possessing the map, such a reader—if he is Bloom—need never leave his armchair to visit any existing territory at all.

KABBALISM is mentioned from time to time in the two earlier books, but the promised separate treatment is disappointing when Bloom reaches it in *Kabbalah and Criticism*. His account of the late medieval systems of Moses Cordovero and Isaac Luria, based on secondary studies by Hebrew scholars (especially Gershom Scholem), is summary and perfunctory, with some noticeable historical omissions and without the imaginative engagement of his discussions of Freud or Nietzsche. In his own expanding system, the use to which he finally puts Cordovero's and Luria's revised kabbalism is to add a further layer of complication to the map of misprision. Cordovero, called the "first Structuralist," is credited with uncovering in his doctrine of the *behinot* (six phases of the kabbalistic *sefirot*, or divine emanations) the "normative structure of images, of tropes and psychic defenses, in many revisionary texts, including many poems of the last three centuries." Luria, "archetype of all Revisionists," is said to have misread Cordovero and thereafter in his *parzufim* produced a set of "theosophical models" which, according to Bloom, "need little manipulation to become models for post-Enlightenment poems." More than a little manipulation is required for Bloom to bring the tenuous Lurianic hypostases into conformity with his theory and his map. His most dazzling feat of ingenuity is his analogizing of *zimzum*, a "composite trope of limitation," which became the "ultimate psychic defense of exiled Jewry": from the derivation of the Hebrew word and Freud's physiological explanation of anxiety, Bloom is able to move on to God's creation of the world through "breathing trouble," and thence to how the creation of a new poem can be the dialectical result of the anxiety of influence.

Despite the juxtaposition in the title, what is important in *Kabbalah and Criticism* is not Bloom's claim to a kabbalistic model for his own criticism but the place he finds in his theory of influence for criticism itself, which is the subject of the last chapter, "The Necessity of Misreading." In the familiar terms of the theory, the critic is to the text as the poet is to his precursor, and again, like poets and their poems, critics and their readings—or misreadings—are neither right nor wrong but only strong or weak. "A poet is strong because poets after him must work to evade him. A critic is strong if his readings similarly provoke other readings." In the double act of misprision that occurs—the critic's misreading of a text which was the result of an earlier misreading by the poet—the strong critical reading does not, as one might expect, simply remain in analogy with the strong poem; it displaces it, "for no strong reading can fail to insist on itself." The view of the comparative strengths of poetry and of criticism expressed in the closing pages of the chapter is as antithetical to the New Critical belief in and respect for the autonomous text as it is possible to imagine: that poems in themselves have no presence, unity, form, or meaning but must acquire those qualities from their readers or from other poems. Criticism, on the other hand, can seem to have more unity, form, and meaning and "a stronger apparent presence" than the poem it comments on. At the

* *Sewanee Review*, Winter 1975, pp. 161-169. While Bloom's admirers have been reading his criticism as a kind of poetry, it has remained for the poet Nemerov to call attention to the critic's slippery reasoning and to misreadings by Bloom himself that may not always be examples of misprision.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conclusion, Bloom looking optimistically toward the future is no longer content to go forward with Ammons and Ashbery, his elected successors to Wallace Stevens. It is the critic, the revisionist reader and insister on his own strength, who now leads the way, unencumbered by deference toward the poems he has misread and displaced, or even toward the conventional idea of a poem at all: "Interpretation is revisionism, and the strongest readers so revise as to make every text belated, and themselves as readers into children of the dawn, earlier and fresher than any completed text could hope to be."

As the third such volume to be issued under Bloom's name in less than a year, *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* brings together with the basic thesis of *The Anxiety of Influence* the modifications made in *A Map of Misreading* and *Kabbalah and Criticism*. In the introductory chapter, Vico is discussed as the philosopher of rhetoric; gnosticism is added as the larger tradition to which kabbalism belongs; Petrarch is assimilated to the line of "lyrical subjectivism" beginning with Spenser and Milton in English; Freud himself in the context of poetic interpretation is called the "strongest of modern poets." The second term in the main title refers to the repression of the poet's creative freedom through the "initial fixation" of influence, and also to the selection of poetic language by which he tries to repress full knowledge of his indebtedness. The poets who are the subjects of Bloom's extended readings are Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Yeats, Emerson, Whitman, and Stevens.

III

In their different but parallel revisions in the role of the critic, Hartman and Bloom in effect are misreading Paul de Man on the hermeneutic circle: to both, in their respective ways, poetry as the foreknowledge of criticism and criticism as the disclosure of poetry means that the critic breaks the circle and steps forward in place of both poet and poem. Hartman is willing to accept secondary creative status for his critic, whose identity is bound up with the writings of others; writing itself he sees as resignedly "living in the secondary, knowing it is secondary." For Bloom, in contrast, the elaboration of his theory of influence is accompanied by a personal evolution that takes him from secondary to primary status in terms that are his own. As early as the "Interchapter" in *The Anxiety of Influence* he gives antithetical criticism a personal dimension: the critic, perhaps together with his readers ("we"), must learn to read the poetic descendants of a great precursor "as if we were their disciples, and so compel ourselves to learn where we must revise them if we are to be found by our own work, and claimed by the living of our own lives." By the conclusion of *Kabbalah and Criticism*, the exhortation implicitly has been fulfilled. In the "children of the dawn" sentence quoted above, both texts and the reading of them are turned into a metaphor and we are allowed to glimpse the author in his own person, fortified by past victories and ready to go on to others, after presumably having been found by new work and claimed by the living of a new life.

Still deferring to the primary literary work, Hartman tries to place the burden of personalism on a revised form of the secondary or literary-critical essay. "The Interpreter: A Self-Analysis" is an example, and for all its meditative discontinuities it is no stronger in suggesting an authorial personality behind the printed page than Hartman's earlier scholarly essays. Bloom is more successful, on a larger scale. Throughout the four books there is a continuing personal presence, in the second and third, at least, increasingly that of a performer. It is evidently to that self-advertising presence that Bloom's most admiring reviewers are responding when they praise his "masculine" qualities or are reminded of the stance of Walt Whitman. For some receptive readers, the sense of personality elsewhere in the books may attach itself even to the map of misprision, so that in all its skeletal abstraction it becomes an object of interest in itself.

Yet beyond the fascination of the author's performing self and his unfolding inner life there is the fact that the theory of misprision is offered as a critical theory and the map as a guide to practical criticism. Bloom already has recognizable younger imitators, conscientiously misreading their poetic texts, who are or will become literature professors themselves, in the institutional setting which for all concerned is becoming inseparable from the literary experience. It was in the classroom as well as in books and the quarterlies associated with its name that the New Criticism built its reputation. In a different time, Bloom's method of misreading (which I would like to believe began as something of a parody of contemporary anti-criticism*) sounds all too easily adaptable to the teaching gimmickry that prevails on all educational levels. (Even Bloom should be given pause by an example mentioned not long ago by Edgar Z. Friedenberg—the "mistranslation" of foreign languages for children in elementary school.) If literature is indeed dead, it at least met its end with dignity in the deaths or the silence of the last great writers. The end of literary criticism, if Bloom's revisionism sets the pattern, may be in the bathos of a permissive classroom, where criticism allows anything whatsoever to be said about literature, and anything said about literature is criticism.

* Bloom on occasion has harsh things to say about the European theorists—e.g., that they provide no aid in "reading any one poem by any poet" (*The Anxiety of Influence*); or that "their invocations of semiology or the archeology of discourse conceal a few simple defensive tropes, and they are at least as guilty of reifying their own metaphors as any American bourgeois formalist has been" (*Kabbalah and Criticism*).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Copland as American Composer

Samuel Lipman

Though Aaron Copland has been an important figure in American serious music for more than fifty years, he remains, as Leonard Bernstein has said, "the best we have," and his career is the very model of the success to which an American composer may aspire. His seventy-fifth birthday, recently celebrated, seems an appropriate moment to inquire into the nature of that career and of his special achievement as an American composer.

Copland was born in Brooklyn in 1900 to Russian Jewish immigrant parents originally named Kaplan. In an autobiographical sketch dating from 1939, Copland seemed at some pains to present himself as his own creation rather than as the product of a milieu:

> I was born on a street in Brooklyn that can only be described as drab. . . . I am filled with mild wonder each time I realize that a musician was born on that street. . . . In fact no one had ever connected music or our family with my street. The idea was entirely original with me.

But there was, by his own witness, music in his house. His four older siblings took music lessons, though evidently without achieving excellence. And so the thirteen-year-old Aaron talked his parents into providing piano lessons. By fifteen he had conceived the idea of becoming a composer; two years later, in 1917, he began harmony lessons with Ruben Goldmark, a student of Dvorák and later head of the composition department at the Juilliard Graduate School, the predecessor of the present Juilliard.

Upon graduation from high school in 1918 he decided to devote his life to music. He continued his piano studies, working with Clarence Adler and Victor Wittgenstein. Soon he also began to compose in earnest, and these youthful pieces brought him into conflict with the academic conservatism of Goldmark, who had no sympathy for what he saw as Copland's "modernistic experiments." Finding the going without much honor at home, the young musician turned his eyes to Europe: not the Europe of his parents, but the Europe of French sophistication, spiced with a dose of the Slavic primitivism so beguilingly administered at that time by Lenin's Bolshevik revolution and Diaghilev's Russian ballet.

In 1921, then, he went to Paris, where he found both the foreign root of one side of his musical development and his first recognition. The story of the numerous American expatriates in Paris during the inter-war period is familiar enough; exiles to a warmer cultural clime, they all seemed happier among strangers. But Copland was different. He had the good sense and the guts to learn what he could—which was a lot—and then to come back home. In France, he also had the good fortune to fall in with Nadia Boulanger, the patron saint of so many American composers of that time, including—in addition to Copland—Roy Harris, Virgil Thomson, and Walter Piston.

Still alive today at eighty-nine, Boulanger has embodied a unique amalgam of Fauré and Stravinsky, of French academicism and the pre-revolutionary Russian avant-garde. She trained Copland in strict counterpoint and the other technical disciplines for which French musical education is famous, and she provided him with an environment in which he could discover the international world of musical modernism, of Stravinsky and Schoenberg, of Milhaud and Honegger, of Prokofiev and Bartók. She early saw Copland's promise, and arranged for the first real performances of his music in Paris; the response to these performances was greatly encouraging.

Still more important, Boulanger gave Copland his first boost back on home soil. She asked him to write a composition for organ and orchestra which she could perform in 1924 in her American appearances with Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony and Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The appearance with Damrosch was less than successful; at the end of the performance Damrosch turned to the audience and said: "If a young man at the age of twenty-three can write a symphony like that, in five years he will be ready to commit murder." But in Boston the story was different. In Koussevitzky, just arrived in Boston from Russia by way of Paris, Copland found his first American-based champion. For Copland, this meant performances, and the best ones at that.

By the winter of 1924-25, Copland had thus been away, had come home, and had been performed under major auspices in perhaps the two most important centers of American musical life. And for all the influences of European and French musical life, he had returned to the United States filled with the conscious desire to become an American composer who composed American music.

At first this meant for Copland the writing of pieces influenced by jazz. *Music for the Theatre* (1925), the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (1926), and the *Symphonic Ode* (1928-29): these jazz works

Samuel Lipman, *whose previous contributions to* Commentary *include "Records and Performances" (February) and "Wagner Comes to Broadway" (January), is a concert pianist who lives in New York.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

represented Copland's first attempt to write a music of what he has called "conscious Americanism." But he was soon to find that jazz was both too limited in itself and too limiting to his work as a serious composer. He then abandoned the style of jazz, though not its feature of rhythmic freedom or some of its spirit, and in 1930 wrote the piece which established him as an influence on American music.

The *Piano Variations* were not meant for a wide audience. First performed by the composer at a concert of the League of Composers in New York in 1931, they were short, dissonant, hard in sound, dry, and difficult. They shared certain features with Schoenbergian serialism, but where Schoenberg was passionately warm, Copland was passionately cold; where Schoenberg's writing was wilfully luxuriant, Copland's was painfully lean. With these *Piano Variations* he placed American music on one of the two tracks it was to follow for a generation, the evocation of steel girders and the skyscraper, of the world of the young industrial giant far removed from the European world of putatively effete passions and neurosis.

But it was also Copland who found the other track which American music was to follow in the years immediately ahead. If Copland's *Piano Variations* greatly influenced the most serious music, his pieces of the late 30's provided a formative influence on American lighter classical music (though Virgil Thomson has claimed some priority for himself as an influence on Copland in this area). With *El Salón México* (1936), Copland began a search for a popular serious music, a style and content which, while employing the technics and some of the musical devices of modernism, would appeal to a "conventional concert-going public." His use in this composition of Mexican folk material associated in his mind with a well-known dance hall in Mexico City, Salón México, presaged his awakening interest in American folk music and the new kind of serious dance soon to be connected with the names of Lincoln Kirstein and Agnes de Mille.

From this new interest of Copland in folk music, dance, and a wider audience stem his three important repertory ballets: *Billy the Kid* (1938), *Rodeo* (1942), and *Appalachian Spring* (1944). These pieces make skillful use of Americana, including the cowboy song "Come wrangle yer bronco" and the Shaker tune " 'Tis the gift to be simple." In a somewhat similar vein is his movie music, most notably *Of Mice and Men* (1939), *Our Town* (1940), *North Star* (1943), and *The Red Pony* (1948). Another example of Copland's interest in a general audience was his writing of patriotic music. In this class are the *Lincoln Portrait* and the *Fanfare for the Common Man*, both completed in 1942.

NOTWITHSTANDING this opening to the masses, Copland resumed his interest in a more abstract music with the *Piano Sonata* (1941), the *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1943), and the *Third Symphony* (1946). These lacked the extra-musical associations of his "popular" music, and they have not been as widely played. After his tentative dip, soon abandoned, into atonal writing in the *Piano Variations*, his *Quartet for Piano and Strings* (1950) utilized the formal methods of serial construction while managing to sound quite like his non-twelve-tone music; his *Connotations*, written for the opening of Lincoln Center in 1962, continued his use of serialism, as did the later *Inscape* (1967). In the past few years, he seems to have composed little, confining himself to smaller-scale works. It is likely that, so far as major pieces are concerned, we are looking at a largely completed body of work.

No adequate summary of Copland's career could omit mention of his work as a performer of his own music as pianist and conductor both in concert and on Columbia recordings. His playing, on a piano of predominantly glassy sonority, has given pianists a clear aural image of what he as composer desires; his technical facility and rhythmic snap have been of great help in establishing the style in which his pieces are performed. As a conductor, however, he has been less successful in determining the way his works are performed by the famous conductors of our time.

But Copland's influence in music, though solidly based on his actual compositional achievement, goes far beyond the pieces he has written and their effect on the audience. From the time of his return to America in the 20's, and as a teacher of composition at Tanglewood from 1940 to 1965, he has made it his business to befriend younger composers, to assist the performances of his contemporaries, and in general to be a stabilizing influence in the somewhat anarchic world of the creative musician. He has become perhaps our leading spokesman for serious music. He has given the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard, later published as *Music and the Imagination* (1952); he has written an influential music-appreciation text, *What to Listen for in Music* (1938); and a history of modern music, *Our New Music* (1941; 1968 revised edition, *The New Music*); and his occasional writings have been collected in *Copland on Music* (1960). A fluent writer, he is by turns charming and reasonable.

BUT it is of course as a composer, regardless of the great energy he has lavished on so many related areas, that Copland's standing and relationship to our musical times must be judged. Too much has been made of the split between his serious and his more popular music, between his thorny, austere works and his lush, tuneful ballets and movie music. For whatever the audience to which he intends his music to appeal, his musical style remains individual and identifiable.

A great deal has been written in analysis of Copland's music. One of its most obvious characteristics—when one looks at it on the printed page or plays it—is its rhythmic variety and freedom. Frequent changes of time signature, many marked accents occurring off the main beats, many alterations of tempo make his music tricky to perform, requiring singers, instrumentalists, and conductors of strong nerves and secure rhythm.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The effect on the listener of all this rhythmic complexity—even on the musician listener—is not always commensurate with the very real difficulty the music presents to the performer. For in Copland's music there is so much rhythmic variety and contrast that instead of rhythmic excitement one often gets an effect of rhythmic plainness. Perhaps also because of the fact that in his music, as in so much contemporary composition, the beginning of the bar is often determined more by notational convenience than by the demands of the music itself, the listener's expectations of rhythmic regularity are so consistently defeated that he sits back and takes everything rhythmically as it comes.

Copland's formal procedures, though musically solid, have broken little new ground. Rather than the traditional 19th-century development by expansion and growth, he has followed the widespread 20th-century practice associated with the names of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, the device of separation of melodic and motivic material into parts which then are continuously reintegrated. His music is frequently marked by the use in fast passages of what Virgil Thomson has called struggle-type counterpoint; his employment of contrapuntal technique in quiet passages gives them an air of poignant tranquility. His harmony, lean in his more abstract works, simple in his more popular works, often functions more as an accompaniment of the melody than as a feature of independent musical interest. Throughout his career he has been a brilliant orchestrator, showing a remarkable ear for orchestral balances and effects, and particularly adept at distributing the notes in chords in such a way that familiar harmonies sound fresh and dissonant harmonies sound clear.

His real distinction is, it seems to me, in the realm of melody. His specialty is long arching melodies of quiet intensity presented either unharmonized or against a slowly changing harmonic background. Whether the melodies are of his own invention or are of folk origin is not really important, for he has integrated what is his and what he has borrowed in a product entirely of his own making. In melody, perhaps more than in any other aspect of music, it is emotional effect, not exact authorship, that is important. Not only do Copland's tunes stick in the mind more than those of any of his contemporaries; they have the power to move audiences.

But Copland's true achievement lies not in his use of rhythm, harmony, counterpoint, or original musical structures; it lies in his ability, through the use of melody, to evoke a mood—the mood of America of the period from the Civil War to World War II. There is in this period of American life a combination of leanness and grandeur that Copland manages to capture. He does more: he catches the emptiness of the city and the quiet of the land. Having done all this, he has succeeded in fixing in the mind of a large public an aural image of what America, and therefore American music, sounds like. Copland sounds like American music, and music that is felt to be American sounds like Copland.

For Copland has managed to integrate his art and himself with his nation and his times. He would not have attained this integration without a passionate conviction that his country was worthy of proclamation, and that a composer like himself was capable of proclaiming it. He has, in other words, been the principal American representative of a long European (rather than American) tradition, the tradition of music as a symbol and expression of the national spirit, the composer as spokesman for the nation.

This kind of music, and the accompanying role for the composer, goes back to Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1821), the first implicitly nationalistic German musical work. The first explicitly nationalistic German opera was *Die Meistersinger* (1868), in which Wagner used not only a national story and a national locale but also at the end of the opera invoked the very name of the nation. But perhaps because in the German-speaking countries the tradition of absolute music had been so high in quality and so popularly successful, it was not in the German musical tradition that nationalism came to be most widely cultivated. For the greatest flowering of serious nationalistic music we must look to the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, Scandinavia, and Spain. Here great music was born of a condition in which the old order of state power, whether foreign or domestic, was on one side of the political and cultural fence, and the popular forces—represented by composers (as well as writers and painters)—on the other. Smetana, Dvorák, and Janacek in what is now Czechoslovakia; Glinka, Borodin, and Mussorgsky in Russia; Grieg and Sibelius in Scandinavia; Albeniz, Granados, and Falla in Spain: the works of all these composers stem from societies in a state of struggle, often with foreign overlords in a political sense, almost always with the pressure of foreign cultural influence hardened into academicism. Sometimes these composers chose national subjects; sometimes they directly quoted folk material; often they were content merely to evoke what they did not write about directly. But in every case their work was held high as the "true" music of the nation in contrast to the hated artificial product of foreign or cosmopolitan influence.

America came into the era of nationalistic musical culture late—not before the turn of the present century, at a time when the American nation was first beginning to see itself as having a mission outside its borders. The musical developments paralleled the political changes. Just as America was late in flexing its muscles in the world, so was it also late in developing any kind of competent professional musical environment, as such an environment was known in Europe. It was not until this century that Americans became good enough to be participants, even at one remove, in European musical culture; American composers had previously not only been imitations of European masters, they had been poor imitations. It was not until Americans had won their spurs on the level of competence that they could set about the proper nationalist task of winning independence from European musical overlordship.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

With Charles Ives, the battle was begun. But Ives's music, though deeply American in derivation, intention, and sound, was largely unperformed and unknown during the period of its writing—the first twenty years of this century—and for many years after. Because of its absence from the mainstream of musical life, Ives's work remained a beginning without possibility of a continuation. It was left to the young men of the 20's—Virgil Thomson, Roy Harris, and Copland—to start the task from scratch. This they did, and with them a specifically American music first emerged into public notice. Although they were very late in coming—at least fifty years behind their colleagues in Europe—they were helped along by the atmosphere of the Popular Front of the 30's—that curious alliance between populist nationalism and left-wing radicalism whose character was suggested with only a faint whiff of unintended irony by Earl Browder's famous formulation, "Communism is 20th-century Americanism." Copland himself was deeply sympathetic to the politics of the Popular Front; and the political euphoria of those days almost certainly played a part in convincing Copland, as well as the others, that a mass audience did exist for the products of serious culture.

By the end of World War II they had each written pieces—Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1928), *The Plough that Broke the Plains* (1936), and *The River* (1937); Harris's *Symphony #3* (1937); Copland's *Piano Variations* (1930), *Billy the Kid* (1938), *Rodeo* (1942), and *Appalachian Spring* (1944)—which, taken together, established an independent American music, a music which was written to be American, and which was received as such by audiences. That Copland has overshadowed Thomson and Harris in the public mind is a tribute to his wider scope, both emotional and musical. Leonard Bernstein was right. The story of Copland's music is the story of the best we in America have.

It is a story, however, that would seem to have come to an end. For nationalism in music has had its day. In Europe, nationalistic music flourished on the way up to nationhood; it was at its most alive during the fighting of the wider political, social, and cultural battles. When these battles were won—when nationhood and some semblance of stability had been reached—nationalistic music, if it was practiced at all, came to seem increasingly artificial and imposed. The most notorious example of such artificial imposition is of course the Soviet Union, where a strenuous attempt has been made for over forty years to force composers under the slogan "national in form, socialist in content" to act as if the 19th century in cultural history had never passed.

It is not simply that the larger goals of nationalism have been reached in the West. It is also that these goals have been overreached. The national and social units which have been achieved are proving too large and too indirect in their relationship to their members, too artificial in their supposed unity, to command assent. And so Western nationalism, which so recently seemed so successful, now suddenly seems senile. All over Europe, to many disaffected groups—whether the Basques or the Welsh, the Bretons or the Scots—the nation seems a lie; and once dominant groups are increasingly losing confidence in their own legitimacy. We in America too, in our plenitude of power and luxury, seem to find nationalistic culture both superfluous and vulgar. Our most advanced intellectuals, when they are not busy promoting the old internationalism, urge on the new ethnicity. The attitude of our leading social classes is strongly against American nationalism in art no less than in politics. Only a lingering nostalgia for a simpler time keeps the memory of the old Americana even so much as faintly respectable.

Copland has himself written in his usual gentle and tolerant way of the sad outcome of his hopes for an American music. In reevaluating Roy Harris in 1967, Copland wrote:

> In rereading my 1940 discussion of Roy Harris's music, I am suddenly aware of a curious dichotomy; Harris the composer has remained very much what he was, but the musical scene around him (and us) has radically altered. . . . My prognostication that the California composer was writing music on which "future American composers will build" now strikes me as downright naive. I had completely lost sight of the fact that a new generation of composers, at a distance of thirty years, would have its own ideas about where a usable past might be found. As it turned out, the young men of this new crop show no signs of wishing to build on the work of the older American-born composers, the generation of the 20's and 30's. Today's gods live elsewhere.

And where do they live? Copland had seen the answer several years before:

> . . . certain tendencies are discernible. The most striking one is the return since 1950 to a preoccupation with the latest trends of European composition. This comes as a surprise, for from the standpoint of their elders, this is a retrogression because it places us in a provincial position vis-à-vis our European confrères. The older generation fought hard to free American composition from the domination of European models because that struggle was basic to the establishment of an American music. The young composers of today, on the other hand, seem to be fighting hard to stay abreast of a fast-moving post-World War II musical scene.

Copland's diagnosis seems even more applicable today, almost twenty years later. From Elliott Carter on the (musical) Right to John Cage and his followers on the (musical and political) Left, American music is now a branch of the world musical scene. Our composers are just as interested in post-Webern serialism, the music of chance, and up-to-date electronics as their European counterparts. If our leading composers are importantly creative (as Carter for one without doubt is), it is as international figures, not as Americans. We may not quite be, as Copland has implied, once again a dependency of the Old World, but neither

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are we distinctive. We have come to the end of a chapter in American music, as we have come to the end of a chapter in our national life. In music, if nowhere else, internationalism has triumphed, and we are all homogenized. Whatever the future shape of American music, it will not follow in the directions toward which Aaron Copland's work once seemed to lead.

Note

The following major compositions of Copland are available, performed by the composer, as conductor or pianist, on Columbia Records:

Appalachian Spring: Suite, M-32736
Billy the Kid, M-30114
Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, MS-6497
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, MS-6698
Duo for Flute and Piano, M-32737
Fanfare for the Common Man, M-30649
Lincoln Portrait, M-30649
Nonet for Strings, M-32737
Quartet for Piano and Strings, M-30376
The Red Pony, M-33586
Rodeo, M-30114
El Salón México, M-33269
Sonata for Violin and Piano, M-32737

The Columbia album, *Copland Conducts Copland: A 75th Birthday Celebration* (D3M 33720), contains the following Copland performances:

Appalachian Spring: Suite
Billy the Kid
Dance Panels
Fanfare for the Common Man
Lincoln Portrait
Our Town
Rodeo
El Salón México

Theater

Alas, Poor Hamlet

Jack Richardson

Is *Hamlet,* as T. S. Eliot concluded, ultimately an artistic failure, a work of unintegrated parts and layers, of mismatched borrowings and techniques that leave its central character vainly searching for a significant action and its author for a dramatic event that will encompass the play's breadth of emotion and intelligence? Or is the play, as Francis Fergusson argued in his book, *The Idea of a Theater,* a finely wrought network of analogies and internal reflections, a drama held together by the traditions of religion, state, and theater, and thus an example of subtle cultural cohesion that is both different from and greater than the consistencies of psychological realism?

Having thus bracketed the "problem" of the play with these very different judgments, and added the punctuation of self-addressed question marks, I admit to a feeling of impatience and weariness, a feeling which the recent New York Shakespeare Festival production of *Hamlet* did little to allay. Why add any more to the burden of interpretation that weighs this play down so that, in a sense, it justifies itself as a theatrical marvel simply by coming alive, despite the handicap of three centuries' worth of critical annotations, each time it is even adequately performed? Why presume to be any better an interpreter of the events at Elsinore than those who, in their enthusiasm over the play and the character of Hamlet, have turned the Prince into aspects of themselves, or who, in their prim reservations, have turned themselves into curios of criticism? When exegesis has been so loosely inclusive as to find evidence in this story of murder, meditations, and revenge to support theses ranging from the Oedipal to the existential, what illumination is left that will not turn out to be simply another perhaps clever but ultimately unsatisfactory critical conceit?

Already my uneasiness has me answering one set of rhetorical questions with another. Before being accused of a Hamlet-like hesitance, then, I will plunge ahead and answer that, despite the misgivings of a literate mind over saying anything at all about Shakespeare's most famous play and hero, the temptation to commentary that the work offers is ultimately irresistible. Irresistible but not particularly pleasant, a temptation that does not even promise much pleasure before the aftermath of regret. One simply feels numbly fated to yield to the enticement, preordained to capitulate, and so it is best to get on about it with dispatch and to bolster oneself with the notion that it is impossible to write for any length of time about the nature of the theater without delivering an opinion of *Hamlet* and feeling that in the deliverance there is an obvious truth that no one has discussed before.

So: Eliot's famous criticism, that Shakespeare has not found an objective equivalent for the emotions within his play, seems to me correct as a partial explanation of the dramatic means of *Hamlet* and totally misapplied as a critical censure. Perhaps because of his lack

JACK RICHARDSON *is our regular theater critic.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of sympathy with excessive, undisciplined personality, Eliot mistook the problem of Hamlet's world for a failure in Shakespeare's play. Hamlet, as much as Eliot, desires objective correlatives for his feelings, passionately wishing at almost every opportunity that his setting will display some confirmation of the magnitude of his understanding and emotions. Shakespeare may have presented us with a character uncomfortably fettered by the plots and moods of earlier treatments of the Prince of Denmark's story, but it is precisely that dramatic discomfort which he turns to advantage by using it thematically. The tense disjunction between Hamlet and the doings around him, the evident lack of balance between his notion of significant action and the machinations, intrigues, and "shufflings" that encircle him—this forms both the play's theme and the crux of Hamlet's character. Thus, what Eliot sees as an aesthetic deficiency is turned into a proposed deficiency of life itself, or at least as Hamlet conceives life to be through most of the drama. When, for example, he says, in his first self-description, that he cannot be denoted truly by "forms, moods, shapes," and that he has "that within which passes show," he announces himself to be someone apart from conventional depictions, and also someone who does not wish to be depicted in any manner that involves the "stale . . . uses of the world."

SUCH USES—modern idiom would say "usages"—which Hamlet dismisses as pretenses to form and order in life, are not abandoned without paying a painful price in estrangement and egoism. Everyone, after all, would like to find the world fashioned after the design of his self and his ambitions, and to realize that this is not so, to perceive suddenly that one is in an "unweeded garden," is as dark a revelation of individual fate as any glimpsed by antique heroes. In an odd way, then, Eliot, in his fussing over the lack of precise equivalents of feeling in *Hamlet*, is more like the play's hero in his criticisms than either Goethe or Coleridge, both of whom Eliot chastised for having put too much of their own creative points of view into their studies of Shakespeare's play.

Of course Eliot, a more sophisticated man than Hamlet, knew that neither in life nor in poetry are satisfactory images for thought and feeling easy to come by or believe in. But he had concluded, as do the great majority of us during our coming to terms with the world, that such objective sanctuaries for the mind and emotions do exist for those who, through various forms of discipline, earn the right to use them. For Eliot, such respites from artistic and spiritual vagueness are already involved in our notion of culture, and to proclaim them inadequate, or outrightly to defy them, is merely the naughty and envious act of an adolescent.

Had Eliot not been, at twenty-five, a poet of old age and hardening categories, he might have sensed that Shakespeare was indeed depicting the aspirations and imperatives of adolescence in a manner that did justice both to its excesses and to its poignancies. But Eliot was too much on guard against the Romantic point of view to bother with distinctions between youthful imperiousness toward the world and the, to him, vague effusions of a misguided poetic.

Now by claiming that Hamlet is an embodiment of adolescence I do not mean to diminish him, although, after the recent decades spent in the psychological and sociological catering to that period of life, many people might justifiably find the word "adolescence" fraught with connotations of shallow complaint and militant self-centeredness. Hamlet, to be sure, does have much in his nature that smacks of youthful misanthropy and self-drama; the sort of sour idealism that marked a good deal of the 1960's youth movement. However, Hamlet is of another time and a prince, and to understand him as Shakespeare must have done, history as well as psychology is needed. Using both, I would construct his profile as follows:

A young aristocrat, perhaps around twenty years old, who sets off for his studies at the University of Wittenberg—the university, be it remembered, of that most famous metaphysical malcontent, Dr. Faustus—with himself and his universe fairly well in tune. His mind is not disabused by his studies of that belief in the nobility of human action which his rank and earlier education had given him. The New Learning complements quite well the medieval culture from which he has come, coupling to its attitude of religious veneration the classical conception of heroic virtue and the specialness of great men's fates. Although he becomes no scholar, Hamlet does know his Hyperion from a Hecuba, and feels that if man is no god, he is nevertheless godlike.

Then his father's death occurs—to Hamlet an event of great magnitude, but in the worlds of politics and natural commerce, only a minor incident to be ceremonially noticed and then passed over. Hamlet's horror at the quick marriage of his mother to Claudius, it must be remembered, is full grown long before the ghost adds the account of murder to the event. The dignity of life itself, as Hamlet has fashioned it in the adolescent manner, has been sullied by this continuation of state and "country" matters in spite of the noble death that has occurred.

There is, of course, youthful exaggeration in all this. Hamlet's father after all was no Oedipus or Theseus; his most memorable public achievement seems to have been a magisterial frown when he smote the sledded Polacks. Nevertheless, to that part of Hamlet's mind that had been stirred by humanist studies, his father seems a heroic enlargement, an embodiment of the new estimation of human qualities, the passing of which is sufficient reason for there to be a deep and lengthy pause in the ordinary doings of state and nature.

When this does not happen, when his mother shows more fealty to the pleasures of incestuous sheets than to the memory of his father, when intrigues of state continue as if a royal death were of no more consequence than a broken trade agreement, when the platitudes of Polonius roll on as if death had not proved them irrelevant, then

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MAN IS THE MEASURE
A Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of Philosophy
Reuben Abel
"Reuben Abel offers, in an eminently readable fashion, the reflections of a highly intelligent and sensitive mind on most of the questions that continue to be of concern to the thoughtful when they consider their place in the scheme of things . . . impressive and heartening, for it testifies to his conception of the philosopher as . . . a thoroughly informed critical commentator on the achievements and issues of modern civilization." — Ernest Nagel
$8.95

KNOWLEDGE AND POLITICS
Roberto Mangabeira Unger
". . . political theory is alive and well. . . . Unger's book . . . is a highly intelligent, thoroughly reasoned and carefully written work . . . a 'total criticism' of liberalism, i.e., of that view of man . . . that has dominated Western thought *since the 17th century . . . he does it* brilliantly. . . ."
— Francis Canavan, America
$12.95

LAW IN MODERN SOCIETY
Toward a Criticism of Social Theory
Roberto Mangabeira Unger
Law in Modern Society uses the social study of law as a way to deepen our insight into the basic problems of social theory. ". . . beautifully argued, lucidly written . . . *truly impressive. The author* develops a novel thesis and he develops it well. Without doubt this is a major contribution. . . ."
— Lewis A. Coser, President, American Sociological Association
$12.95

IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS
Martin Seliger
What is an "ideology"? How do ideologies influence, and how are they used in, the political process? Surveying — and taking issue with — such leading writers as Weber, Marx, Mannheim, Bell, Feuer, and Arendt, the author offers a major re-appraisal of the theory of ideology, with reference to both historical problems and contemporary policy issues.
$14.95

THE MESSAGE OF THE BUDDHA
K. N. Jayatilleke Edited by **Ninian Smart**
This excellent guide to the teachings of Gautama, the Buddha, elucidates the origins and nature of the oldest tradition of Buddhist thought — Theravāda Buddhism. The author, one of the best known Buddhist scholars in Asia, explores the historical rise of Buddhism and the relevance of Buddhist doctrine in the modern world.
$10.95

The Free Press
A DIVISION OF MACMILLAN PUBLISHING CO., INC.
100D Brown Street, Riverside, New Jersey 08075

Hamlet condemns life for not living up to his expectations. Many of his accusations seem nobly made, but, in terms of the ways and needs of the world, they are overdemanding and petulant—that is to say, adolescent.

WITH THE introduction of the ghost's testimony, however, the form of Hamlet's adolescence changes. No longer is it a matter of the world's falling short of his ideals, but of his failing to meet the standards which he believes the world—or, I should say, that part of the world which, heroic and absolute, exists in Hamlet's mind—has set for him. Called upon to act, Hamlet is simply unprepared; he has not yet grown up to what is demanded of him. The arguments he had used to prove the ordinary world a place of little consequence, he now turns upon himself and his situation, flaying the former for its baseness and charging the latter with insoluble contradictions and absurdities. Knowing himself now to be unfledged and unsure, he swaggers about in feigned madness and slinks off for private moments of self-pity and recrimination. Scraps of undigested philosophies comfort and distress him, and only Shakespeare's compulsive ability as a poet keeps those celebrated monologues from revealing themselves as little more than youthful harangues and diatribes.

As the play progresses, Hamlet does mature, but not overmuch. When he confronts the gravediggers and Yorick's skull and uses the logic of his university curriculum to prove to Horatio that Alexander might well be now stopping up a bunghole—the scene that is taken by many to portray the deepest destruction of Hamlet's once-heroic conception of life—he is still, it seems to me, speaking in set phrases and with an overdramatic sense of conceit, in both senses of that word. Confronted by this base image of human life, Hamlet still follows the spur of a quibble, as Doctor Johnson would have said, rather than the route of action he feels he must begin in order to claim his rights of manhood.

Only when he is dying and confides to Horatio his worries over the reputation he will leave behind him, does Hamlet finally appear, in the best and worst sense, to have grown up.

Now this notion of Hamlet as the supreme adolescent, while I believe it to be correct, and to supply an objective consistency to Shakespeare's play, does not, of course, harmonize well with the second of the antithetical points of view with which I began this discussion, Francis Fergusson's idea of *Hamlet* as a play of ritual, a structure of mirrored imagery in which personal and public decay pervades in a well thought out balance. But this idea of *Hamlet* as a study of a diseased body politic is only acceptable if we assume the Prince's own evaluation of himself and his surroundings and even then we must force ghosts, clowns, players, and the mischances of melodrama to support a structure which they can bear only with the help of the most baroque critical buttressing.

Of course there is more afoot in *Hamlet* than the aspect I've chosen to emphasize—Hamlet's sexual attitude, for instance, with its distaste for women's physicalities, and with its refined-young-man's pre- and post-coital depressions—but I feel I've yielded enough to temptation in stating what I think the main scheme of Hamlet to be. For the insight that has resulted, gratitude should be given the New York Shakespeare Festival production mentioned above, whose tepid albeit clear rendition of the play allowed me to muse and theorize undisturbed by any obtrusive theatrical entertainment.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

David, King of Israel

Jules Maidoff

Original, hand signed and numbered etching Edition limited to 200

This graphic adventure blends the richly textured and fascinating interplay of an ancient subject in a modern treatment. In soft tones of sepia, the etching measures 16" x 17¾" on a hand-made ivory-colored sheet 21" x 29½".

From our exciting variety of signed originals, this work is an exceptional purchase, likely to increase in value over the years. (Mr. Maidoff's work in galleries starts at $75.00.) This signed and numbered etching of King David is available to readers of Commentary for only $60.00.

Maidoff's rare gifts have not gone unnoticed. His many exhibitions have been warmly and enthusiastically received by the critics in Philadelphia, New York, Rome, Milan, Florence, Lugano (Switzerland), Washington, D.C., Manhasset, Westhampton, New Hope, Bethesda, and private collections both in this country and in Europe.

"Jules Maidoff, a fine young American painter and draftsman, works within the humanist tradition of western art. Maidoff's work reveals the human condition in a highly personal way, yet it is universal in its impact because of his sensitive and poetic approach."

Oriole Farb, Director
Riverside Museum, New York

"An expressionist manner in his figure subjects with vigorous color and solid statement." **— New York Times**

COMMENTARY 165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022. I have enclosed my check for $_____ to cover the cost of _____ numbered and signed impressions of DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL by Jules Maidoff, @ $60.00 each, including postage and insurance. If I am not completely satisfied, I may return this work in good condition, insured, within ten days and you will send me a refund.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Ode to the Lawsuit

SIMPLE JUSTICE. By RICHARD KLUGER. *Knopf. 823 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by CHESTER E. FINN, JR.

IT WAS in December 1952 that the Supreme Court first heard oral argument in the five cases that history would know collectively as *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. The immediate question before the Court was whether to overturn or let stand the state school-segregation laws enacted in the six decades since *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* had sanctioned the principle of "separate but equal." Free and compulsory public education, uncommon when the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified and far from universal at the time of *Plessy* (a case concerning railway segregation), had in the interim become the norm everywhere, and in Southern and border states public education generally meant separate schools for black and white. But rarely were they equal. The NAACP had already made substantial progress at the college and graduate-school level in persuading the courts to command equality of treatment. Since the 20's, moreover, strategists at the NAACP and the Howard University Law School had weighed the possibility of directly attacking the legal basis of segregation itself by seeking a reversal of *Plessy* on the grounds that it was a misinterpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment and that state actions classifying and separating citizens solely on the basis of their race were forbidden by the Constitution. *Brown* v. *Board of Education* became the weapon of that attack.

Richard Kluger's monumental account is really three books. He has written a sympathetic mini-history of the Negro in America, emphasizing the actions, laws, and court decisions that shaped, limited, and sometimes restored his rights as a citizen, but including also a string of vignettes and profiles of major figures such as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. DuBois. Second, he offers a detailed and engrossing examination of the pre-1950 civil-rights movement and the men, organizations, and ideas that energized it; readers familiar with Martin Luther King, Roy Wilkins, and the militant groups of the 60's will be re-acquainted with Charles H. Houston, James M. Nabrit, Jr., Walter F. White, the origins of the Legal Defense Fund, the protracted campaign to desegregate the federal government itself, and the pioneering lawsuits of the 30's and 40's that began to shake the legal bulwarks of racial separation. Third, Kluger's seven years of research have yielded a remarkable chronicle of *Brown* and its companion cases, tracing their origins in Topeka, suburban Wilmington, the District of Columbia, and rural Virginia and South Carlina, their tortuous passage through lower and appellate courts, and their protracted and climactic consideration by the highest court in the land.

The Supreme Court chapters are fascinating. From interviews, scrutiny of the transcripts and briefs, and examination of letters, diaries, and other archival material as well as contemporary news stories and subsequent monographs, Kluger has synthesized a revealing account of the workings of the high court and the views and actions of the eleven justices who signed the landmark decrees. (Fred M. Vinson and Robert H. Jackson died during the Court's three-year bout with *Brown* and were succeeded by Earl Warren and John Marshall Harlan.) A Court that in the preceding years had been split on most major issues and divided in its opinions fully appreciated the gravity of the school-desegregation cases and the importance of presenting a harmonious front and a unanimous decision on so highly charged an issue. But the justices also came to the conference room with clashing social philosophies, diverse interpretations of the Constitution, and distinctive views on the propriety and feasibility of judicial action in the political realm. Buoyed especially by Felix Frankfurter, who sensed from the outset that if the Court were to sail into these waters it was imperative that every member climb aboard a single craft, the new Chief Justice, Earl Warren, waited, persuaded, and, in drafting the decisions himself, artfully knit the disparate views of his colleagues into a united opinion.

Of the process and the personalities Kluger discloses much. And if his tale were frozen in time these revelations would suffice. As it is, they amply repay the large investment of effort needed to digest this bulky tome. But two decades have now elapsed since the Supreme Court's single voice remanded the cases "to the District Courts to take such proceedings and enter such orders and decrees consistent with this opinion as are necessary and proper to admit to public schools on a racially non-discriminatory basis with all deliberate speed the parties to these cases." And in that period a simple and seemingly indisputable principle—that the Constitution forbids states and their instrumentalities to discriminate against citizens on the basis of race—has been fanned into the most protracted, rancorous, and divisive domestic blaze of the post-war era. The two-to-six months which Thurgood Marshall, at the time chief counsel for the NAACP (and since 1967 himself a member of the Court), suggested might be required for the nation's segregated school districts to come into compliance have lengthened into a generation of resistance, litigation, and even bloodshed.

The specific requirements of *Brown* have largely been met. The legally constituted dual school systems of the Southern and border states have, reluctantly but inexorably, been unified; a black child

CHESTER E. FINN, JR., *is a research associate in the governmental studies program of the Brookings Institution.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How do you describe your Mother?

It's just as difficult if she's a magazine.

MOTHER JONES isn't just a magazine about politics, literature, trivia, music (from R&B to Beethoven), home-cooking, feminism, poetry, art, the environment, movies, psychology, backpacking, pottery, and joy (and anger) — it's all those things and more.

MOTHER JONES is a magazine for the rest of us. For people who are surviving the age, but who want — and **expect** — more. For people who grew up in the Sixties and Seventies. Who've broken with the old society, but are still looking for the new. It's a kind of road map, compendium, home companion and provocation to thought — a catalog of possibilities for yourself and the society you won't find anywhere else. Or at least all in one place.

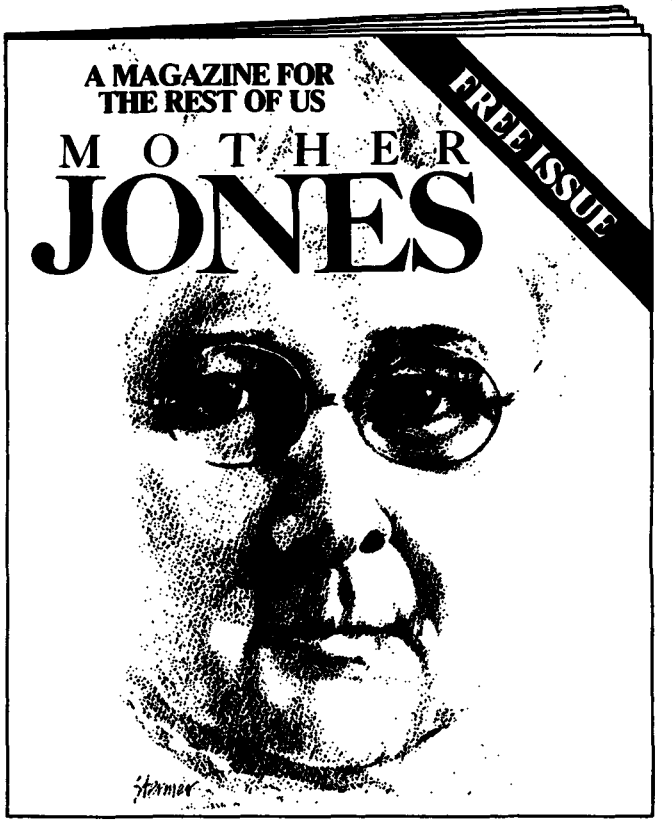
MOTHER JONES has attracted writers like Robert Coles. William Appleman Williams. Grace Paley. George Woodcock. Doris Grumbach. Pat Watters. Christopher Jencks. Denise Levertov. And dozens of new young writers with the promise of a radically different magazine that is complex in times that have grown more simple-minded.

MOTHER JONES is a bit of the **Whole Earth Catalog,** but not quite; a bit of the old **Ramparts,** but not quite that either; in fact, it's a new blend of a whole fistful of magazines, newspapers, journals, catalogs, and books that we've grown to admire over the years, but that taken alone, never quite reflected the complexity, the richness or the range of our lives.

Right now MOTHER JONES is on its way to more than 100,000 Charter Subscribers with a moving study of one woman's loneliness, by Suzanne Gordon. "Hi, my name is Ho Chi Minh Goldberg" — a look at what it feels like to raise your child — or grow up yourself — communally. Site-photographs of the work of the new "de-architecture" architects. A report on what happens when workers run their own factory, the surprises as well as the successes. "Don't Let Julia Child Get You Down" — talking back to cookbooks. Tips on buying used cameras. A Bicentennial tryptich by Charles Bragg. And more...all in MOTHER JONES.

It's a unique magazine, designed for a unique reader. **And you can try it out with no obligation or commitment.** We'll send you the current issue of MOTHER JONES FREE. If you like it, we'll bill you for a year's subscription (9 additional issues) at just $8 — **a $4.00 saving.** But if you don't like it — for any reason — just write "cancel" across the bill when it comes. That's it. Hassle free. And the issue of MOTHER JONES is yours to keep, either way.

Why not take the chance? There's no obligation, and besides, isn't it about time you got back in touch with the rest of us. After all, there's no sense in living the Seventies alone.



FREE ISSUE

SEND FOR YOUR FREE ISSUE TODAY!

MOTHER JONES 4012
1255 Portland Place
Boulder, Colorado 80302

YES, please send me a FREE copy of MOTHER JONES **with no obligation.**
If I like it, enroll me as a Charter Subscriber at just $8 for the year — **a $4.00 saving.** However, if I don't like it, all I have to do is write "cancel" across the bill, and that's it. With no questions asked. (In either case, the current issue is mine to keep.)

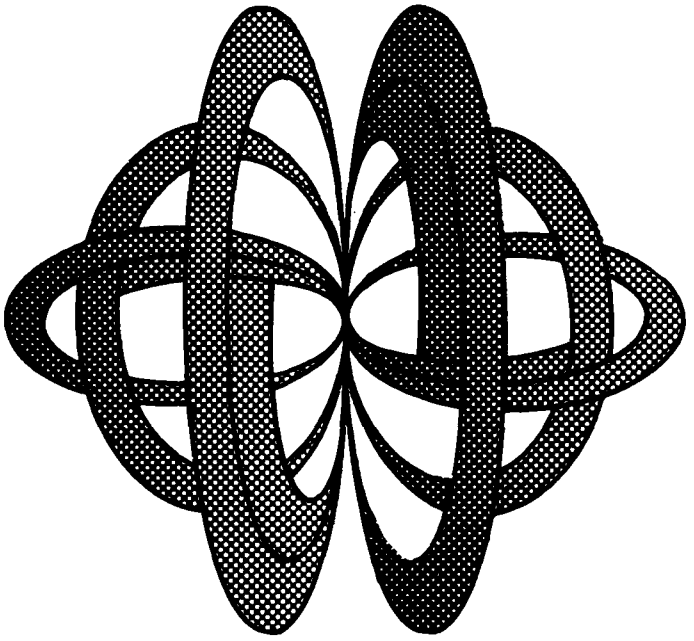
Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Judaism in America

From Curiosity to Third Faith

Joseph L. Blau

"Judaism" in America today is a generic name for many Judaisms. It is this pluralism, this adaptation to the diversity of cultures in America, which, in Blau's opinion, signifies the vitality of the religion and the creativity of the Jewish people.

Joseph L. Blau, Professor of Religion at Columbia University, treats the history of Judaism from 1654, when the first Jews settled here, through the last century when their numbers and distribution created "America's third faith." He traces the impact on Judaism of such American influences as the right to have freedom *from* as well as of religion, the distrust of intellectual systems that leads to "protestantism," and the emphasis on morality rather than on ritual.

This is an important book for all Jews no matter what their involvement in or separation from formal religion and for all non-Jews seeking a better understanding of their Jewish fellow-citizens. $8.95. A volume in the Chicago History of American Religion series.

Now in paperback....

A Textbook of Israeli Hebrew

With an Introduction to the Classical Language. Second Corrected Edition

Haiim B. Rosén

For all who want to read, write, and speak acceptable Israeli Hebrew and to understand less complex biblical Hebrew, this is the ideal textbook. Those unacquainted with a language other than English will find the structural differences carefully explained. The student is trained to read "unvocalized" script as the native reader does. "Professor Rosén proves himself a lively, painstaking, and always informative mentor."—*Jewish Recorder*. "An excellent text."—*National Jewish Monthly*. $7.95

The University of Chicago PRESS

At bookstores or from

and a white child in neighboring homes are no longer forbidden to enter the same schoolhouse. That in itself is a monumental accomplishment, albeit a century late. It was accompanied by pain and trauma, but it happened, as it probably would not have if the Court had ruled differently in *Brown*. Many other Jim Crow laws and practices have fallen alongside the dual school system, as the nation struggled to cleanse itself of what Kluger fairly terms its original sin.

But the courts did not stop with the disestablishment of *de jure* segregation, nor have Congress and the executive branch simply allowed individuals and communities to sort themselves out, subject only to the requirement that government itself may not discriminate on the basis of race. As desegregation has metamorphosed into integration, as *de jure* has stretched toward *de facto*, as free choice has given way to obligatory percentages, as the clamor for equal outcomes has overtaken the plea for equal treatment, as a dozen different minorities (and, in the case of women, a majority) have claimed the rights vouchsafed the Negro, as the venue has shifted out of the old Confederacy and embraced the entire land, and as the agencies of government have brandished carrots and sticks of every description, the nation has moved far beyond the question of whether Linda Brown should have to travel a mile to the Monroe school when her father would rather she attended the Sumner school three blocks from home.

When he turns to such matters, and to developments of the past two decades generally, Kluger becomes cursory, ideological, and a shade insensitive. Had he omitted his thirty-page epilogue on recent events and personalities, the book would still have had flaws—excessive detail, long digressions, and a tendency to moralize about historical events—but its manifest strengths would have prevailed. His treatment of matters still fresh in the memory, however, is slanted enough to raise doubts about his judgment and thus to dim the illumination that the first 750 pages seemed to lend to less well remembered years.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He has his say on the last four Presidents: Eisenhower comes through as morally deficient, notwithstanding the fact that his administration wrote the first civil-rights bill to be enacted since 1875, while John Kennedy, who by most accounts sidestepped the issue as long as he could, is seen as "genuinely committed." Lyndon Johnson had the right instincts, and his civil-rights and anti-poverty programs were "extraordinary," but they, and the President's reputation, got mired down somewhere in the Mekong Delta. And then Nixon, the scoundrel. Page after page recounts his sins against black America, and the gravest of them was putting strict constructionists onto the Supreme Court. No matter that in its Holmes County, Charlotte, and Denver decisions, the Burger Court accelerated and widened the national movement toward integrated schools, and did so with virtual unanimity. (Justice Rehnquist entered a solitary dissent in the Denver case.) Of greater consequence to Kluger is what the Court failed to do in *Rodriguez* and *Milliken* v. *Bradley*: to mandate uniform school expenditures everywhere within state borders, and to require entire metropolitan areas to integrate their schools, blending urban blacks and suburban whites without regard to municipal boundaries.

There is a viewpoint here, expressed with consistency in Kluger's strong, somewhat florid prose, and it is one that many will find congenial. For Kluger, *Brown* was the first great peak in an endless juridical roller coaster that the nation ought not brake or disembark from, however reckless the speed or jolting the curves. The "justice" of the title turns out to be far from "simple"—its lineaments will be readily recognized by students of John Rawls—for at the end of that careening ride we glimpse a society quite different from the one mandated by the Court in 1954.

But the problem with the book extends beyond the author's own conception of a just society, his obvious pleasure with events that propel us toward it, and his ill-concealed contempt for those who impede that progress. *Simple Justice* is, above all, an ode to the lawsuit, a celebration of the courtroom as catalyst for social reform, and a paean to (in Nathan Glazer's term) the "imperial judiciary."

Not, one hastens to add, every lawsuit or every decision. From *Dred Scott* and *Plessy* to the present day, the Supreme Court has itself impeded progress all too frequently for Kluger's taste. But his confidence in the judicial process as the primary engine of social justice endures, as shown in an extraordinary passage (there are others like it) in the preface:

> Some protested [segregation], to be sure. But no political leader risked all of his power and no sector of the nation's governmental apparatus was fully applied against this grave injustice—until the Supreme Court of the United States took that step. There was irony in this because the nine justices, as has often been said, constitute the least democratic branch of the national government. Yet this, most likely, was one reason why the Court felt free to act: it is not compelled to nourish the collective biases of the electorate; it may act to curb those unsavory attitudes by the direct expedient of declaring them to be intolerable among civilized people.

Kluger, then, stands in bold opposition to Glazer, the late Alexander Bickel and Robert McCloskey, and other scholars who have cautioned against the reckless intrusion of the "least democratic branch" into heated social and political issues, and he shows little sympathy for the many jurists who have feared that the long-term costs of an activist court may exceed the benefits of imposing their own philosophy upon the nation.

Foremost among such jurists was Felix Frankfurter himself, to whose abhorrence of racial discrimination and of those who, in practicing it, invoked the authority of the federal Constitution, was joined an equally profound sense of judicial restraint and of the danger of reading one's personal views into the Constitution. Kluger's gauge, it would appear, has more to do with the substance of one's philosophy than with such niceties of scruple, and, in the years since *Brown*, he

New Titles

MICHAEL AVI-YONAH
Jerusalem the Holy
Illustrated with 130 photographs, 30 in full color
This handsome book is an appropriate gift for Passover, as well as for bar mitzvahs and confirmations.
Hardcover $10.00

LEO W. SCHWARZ, editor
The Jewish Caravan
Great Stories of Twenty-Five Centuries
Includes Buber, Asch, Sholom Aleichem, Kafka, I. B. Singer, Babel, Malamud and Agnon, and many others.
Paperback $9.95

CYNTHIA OZICK
The Pagan Rabbi
And Other Stories
Stories by one of the most important writers of today.
Paperback $3.45

FRANZ KAFKA
The Complete Stories
Edited by Nahum N. Glatzer
"An invaluable, crucial volume."
—Chicago Sun-Times Book Week
Paperback $5.95/Hardcover $12.50

SARAH B. POMEROY
Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves
Women in Classical Antiquity
"Dr. Pomeroy's book leaves us in her debt."—*The New York Times Book Review*
Paperback $5.50/Hardcover $10.00

GRACE W. WEINSTEIN
Children and Money
A Guide for Parents
How to deal with money without making it a symbol of love or approval.
Paperback $2.50

At your bookstore or from
Schocken Books
200 Madison Avenue, New York 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has found the Supreme Court a more consistent advocate of his philosophy than the elected branches of government. And that, for him, appears to be enough.

It is painful to watch a good writer shed the discipline imposed by deep research and allow his passions to overtake his objectivity. No doubt it is the viewpoint and the passion, more than the massive dose of welcome information about an interesting and important subject, that have elevated the appearance of this volume into a major publishing event rather than one left to the dusty pages of historical reviews. One senses, however, what Justice Frankfurter would have thought.

Disjunctions

THE CULTURAL CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM. By DANIEL BELL. *Basic Books. 301 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by PETER L. BERGER

THIS book, a sequel to *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973), rounds out Daniel Bell's panoramic picture of the present condition and probable future of Western civilization. It is an important book—erudite, articulate, and in large part persuasive—and it deserves to be widely read and discussed.

The main thrust of Bell's argument is very clear (despite a number of intriguing sidelines), and it revolves around what Bell calls "the disjunction of realms." There are three such "realms" in society—the techno-economic structure, the culture, and the polity. When these three are respectively characterized, as they are today in the West, by advanced capitalism, by modernism, and by liberal democracy, the result is a condition of mounting and increasingly explosive tensions.

As Bell points out, the techno-economic structure of advanced capitalism has produced unprecedented affluence. Its very success, however, has also given birth to forces that are profoundly subversive of the capitalist economy itself—*not*, as Marx thought, on account of inherent class contradictions, but on account of developments in Bell's second "realm," the realm of culture. The culture of contemporary capitalist societies in the West has been shaped by modernism, and its ruling principles have increasingly become the ideal of self-realization, the radical rejection of restraints, and an unremitting hostility toward the bourgeois ethic on which capitalism rests. (The developmental relation between the first and second "realms" is pithily summed up by Bell in one subheading: "From the Protestant Ethic to the Psychedelic Bazaar.")

In its advanced stage, the ideal of self-realization is bound to clash head-on with the functional rationality on which the continued existence of a technologically sophisticated economy depends—this, according to Bell, is what in fact happened, climactically, in the United States in the late 1960's with the triumph of Dionysian counter-reason in a variety of cultural spheres. But the fact that modernism has triumphed in virtually all respectable areas of the culture, that it now constitutes the cultural establishment and controls most cultural institutions, has not at all changed its essentially "adversary" posture toward the bourgeois ethic. And in the face of challenge, the corporate elite in charge of the economy has shown itself helpless; capitalism has proved unable to articulate for itself a plausible ideology of legitimacy.

The conflict between the techno-economic structure and the culture is further aggravated by the peculiar features of a liberal-democratic polity. Under one or another form of authoritarianism, the political order might serve as an arbiter between the demands of functional rationality and those of self-realization, and between the social groups embodying these conflicting aspirations. Under liberal democracy, this arbitrating task of the polity is made near-impossible. As Tocqueville long ago predicted, liberal democracies have come increasingly to be governed by the radical and radicalizing principle of equality, and are faced today with an accelerating "revolution of rising entitlements"—entitlements not just to bigger and better slices of the economic pie, but to politically guaranteed happiness. No political order can meet such grandiose expectations, a democratic order least of all.

Not only, then, has the legitimacy of capitalism been undermined, but the legitimacy of liberal democracy has come to be undermined as well. What then of the future? Whether Bell intends it or not, it is hard to resist the conclusion that, given these historical forces, we are in either for a collapse of the economic system or for the end of democracy, or possibly both. One reads on with the hope that, by the end of the book, Bell will at least give some hint of a way out. But the hope is in vain. The book does conclude with "a reaffirmation of liberalism," but following as it does on nearly 300 pages of devastation, this strikes an almost desperate note. Nor does Bell say how such a "reaffirmation" is sociologically imaginable. Which social groups would be its bearers? What institutions could help bring it about? What new ethos might result from it? The only institution Bell mentions in this connection is the Supreme Court (heaven help us), and the only attitude he appeals to is the revival of a "tragic sense of life."

It seems to me that this disappointing conclusion is related to a surprising inconsequence in Bell's argument (in which, incidentally, he closely resembles Robert Nisbet in his recent *Twilight of Authority*). Early on, Bell maintains that an important cause of our current crisis is the breakup of religious authority. At one point he even says that "the real problem of *modernity* is the problem of belief," and goes on to risk the "unfashionable answer" that Western civilization needs "the return . . . of some conception of religion." Yet there is not a word about religion in his final reaffirmation of the liberal creed (except for a negative refer-

PETER L. BERGER *is professor of sociology at Rutgers and the author of, most recently,* Pyramids of Sacrifice. *Mr. Berger's article, "The Greening of American Foreign Policy," appeared in these pages last month.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ence to traditional Catholicism). I myself would be the first to reject any notion of a reversion to some updated version of Christendom (in the unlikely case that such a project had any chance of being realized). But there are other religious possibilities in our society, possibilities that affirm pluralism and freedom of conscience, and that are fully compatible with the liberalism supported by Bell and, indeed, by most Americans. As Bell himself indicates so well, secularism has been the Achilles' Heel of the liberal creed. It would seem to follow from his own analysis that the crisis of the liberal democratic polity is not likely to be resolved until this secularist animus has been checked and reversed.

"Yiddishkeit"

WORLD OF OUR FATHERS. By IRVING HOWE, with the assistance of KENNETH LIBO. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 714 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT ALTER

THERE is a haunting phrase at the end of the introduction to *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, written twenty-two years ago by Irving Howe in collaboration with Eliezer Greenberg, which lingers in the imagination because it defines an impelling paradox of Jewish existence. Howe and Greenberg, after seventy-one luminous pages which trace the backgrounds and the guiding assumptions of Yiddish literature, ruefully note how this once folk-oriented literature now survives in isolated pockets of writers and readers still stubbornly clinging "to a language which for them is not only history but the answer to history." It is an answer for them, of course, as it cannot be for us. Now, in an ambitious attempt to bridge the gap between them and us through a sustained act of imagination, Howe has written *World of Our Fathers*, a massive account of East European Jewish immigrant life in New York City and of the culture of *Yiddishkeit* that expressed most of the distinctive values the immigrants sought to transplant and cultivate on American soil.

The tension between the two terms of that paradox about history is in a sense the real subject of Howe's new book. The squalid, impoverished, confused, intensely vital world of the Yiddish-speaking immigrants was hurtling through a centrifuge of historical change that would quickly scatter it to vestigial atoms, but the ideological and cultural exponents of that world, together with their active constituency in *amkho*, the plain Jewish masses, cherished the belief that Yiddish culture might, or should, embody a principle of eternal renewal. For them, Yiddish, steeped in history, laid claim to being in some way beyond history. Focusing on this underlying contradiction between evanescence and renaissance, Howe becomes an elegiac poet—elegiac but not, I think, sentimental—of the immigrant milieu.

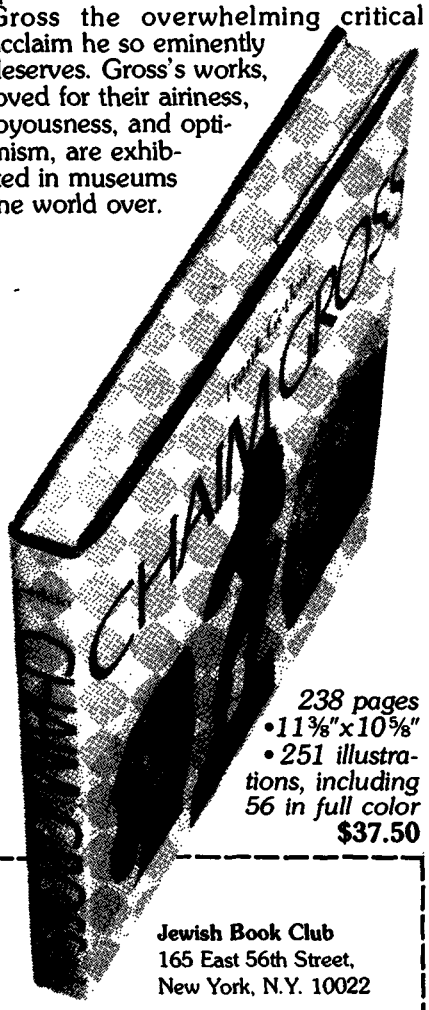
World of Our Fathers seems almost a genre unto itself, and it is important to see clearly the peculiar nature of the intellectual project it represents in order to get some sense of its actual achievement. The book reflects an enormous amount of historical investigation, but the result is not, at least in any conventional sense, a work of historical research. Howe, aided by Kenneth Libo and a whole team of researchers (all generously acknowledged), went through a vast literature in Yiddish and English of historical studies, both general and specialized, of memoirs, both published and archival, of newspapers and magazines of the period, and, finally, even conducted extensive interviews with elderly survivors of the immigrant world. Out of all this, he heroically aspires to cover every significant aspect of the old East Side with authoritative thoroughness. Living and working conditions, educational and cultural institutions, the family structure, the labor movement, socialism, the Yiddish press, Yiddish literature, immigrant involvement in

ROBERT ALTER *is professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Berkeley and a contributing editor of* COMMENTARY. *His most recent books are* Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre *and* Modern Hebrew Literature.

FOR JEWISH ART COLLECTORS

Chaim Gross
by Frank Getlein

This magnificent collection is a testimony to the magic and beauty that grace the sculptures of this major Jewish artist. The many superb reproductions of his work presented in this book provide excellent examples of the special talents that have won for Chaim Gross the overwhelming critical acclaim he so eminently deserves. Gross's works, loved for their airiness, joyousness, and optimism, are exhibited in museums the world over.



238 pages
•11⅜"x10⅝"
• 251 illustrations, including 56 in full color
$37.50

Jewish Book Club
165 East 56th Street,
New York, N.Y. 10022

Please send _____ copies of Chaim Gross by Frank Getlein at $37.50 each. My check for $ _____ is enclosed. (The Jewish Book Club pays all packing and shipping costs.)

Name_____

Address_____

_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American politics—each is accorded its own patiently detailed chapter; and the two large main sections of the book, "The East Side" and "The Culture of Yiddish," are framed by two excellent introductory chapters on East European Jewish life and the experience of immigration and then two intelligent though necessarily somewhat sketchy concluding chapters on the subsequent generations of American Jewry.

The goal of total comprehensiveness is bound to be elusive, for anyone writing on the past is guided by his own implicit bias of values in what he sees as worth accounting for historically. There is, for example, as an otherwise enthusiastic review in *Business Week* observed, almost nothing on the contribution of the Jewish immigrants to American business at large or to the communications industry. Even in what is actually dealt with, one could sometimes quarrel with the amount of space allotted to different topics: some readers, for instance, might have preferred a greater stress on religious life, a less detailed account of labor-movement politics. In any event, a writer is entitled to emphasize the materials that are most congenial to him, and one must say that, whatever the emphases, not much is left out and nothing touched on is treated unfairly. The impulse, moreover, to give the fullest possible account of things leads Howe to devote attention not only to the impressive contributions of the immigrant world but also to its social dysfunctions and its trivia; so there are lucid sections on wife desertion, on Jewish prostitution, on delinquency and gangsterism, on the ordinary street life of the immigrant youth, on adult leisure activities, on the creation of the Catskill resorts as a haven from the teeming city. "A sense of natural piety toward one's origins," Howe remarks in his epilogue, "can live side by side with a spirit of critical detachment," and he actually manages to achieve that difficult balance, both in the material selected for presentation and in his view of it.

The real question about *World of Our Fathers* is what it is all for. I have said that, despite its impressive thoroughness, it is not quite a work of historical research. By this I mean simply that Howe, in undertaking an indefatigable survey of the whole, is necessarily limited in the amount of new light he can throw on the various parts. His chapters, for example, on the *shtetl*, on the travails of immigration, on Yiddish literature and Yiddish theater, are lively, balanced, and often keenly perceptive, but from the viewpoint of the professional historian they are reviews of familiar material for which a variety of specialized studies exists. Howe's overview of the whole subject, moreover, in no way pretends to be revisionist history, wisely eschewing any doctrinaire approach like Marxism that might provide the leverage for sweeping reinterpretation. There are, however, other grounds for originality in a historical study than those that would be recognized by the professional historian.

What this is, above all, is a *writer's* book about the immigrant experience, constantly pressing, through all the wealth of historical documentation, to find a prose adequate to the contradictions, the variety, the minute shadings, and the felt emotional qualities of its vast subject. The models for this kind of enterprise would have to be sought in the period before the academic professionalization of historiography, when there was no sharp boundary between historical and imaginative writing, in figures like Gibbon and Michelet for whom the management of a prose-rhythm, the selection of an image or an illustrative detail, were paths of access to the reality of their historical subject. Howe's writing is a good deal less elaborate than theirs but hardly less consciously mediated in its rhetorical maneuvers.

As Howe touches upon hundreds of individual figures in this sprawling historical landscape, there are a few that seem particularly to arrest his attention as luminous mirrors of his own writer's enterprise. His warmly sympathetic portrait of Hayim Greenberg, Labor Zionist thinker and intellectual journalist

JERUSALEM OF LITHUANIA

Illustrated and Documented

A picture album and thematic guidebook to 500 years of Jewish life and creativity in Vilna.

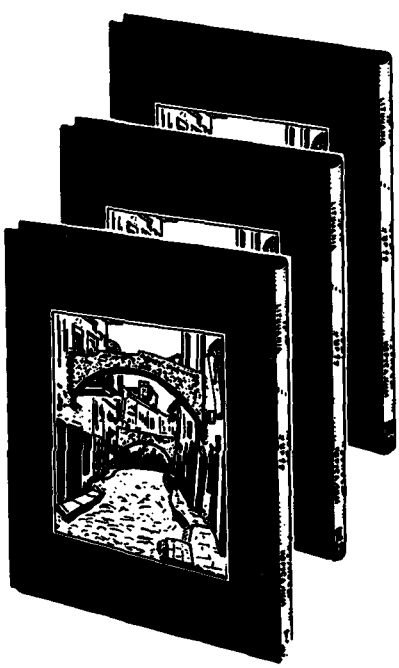
Compiled by Leyzer Ran.

3,000 pictures and documents, with explanations in English, Yiddish, Hebrew, and Russian. 3 volumes—1,000 pages in folio.

Second Printing

$40.00 plus $2.00 for postage.
Send your order and check to:

VILNA IN PICTURES, INC.
34-40 93rd Street
Jackson Heights, New York 11372



"This beautiful album has given the Jews of Vilna a life eternal in pictorial history —the true gift of historical remembrance." Lucy S. Dawidowicz—Commentary

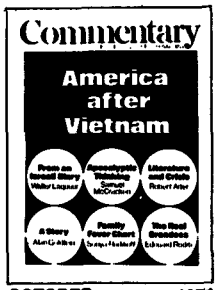
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in four languages, has the look of an oblique autobiographical sketch: "At once enthusiast and skeptic, public man and private intelligence, a creature of multiple moods and personae, Greenberg emerges finally as a *writer*, the kind who responds to his moment, receptive and caustic, oratorical and furtive." The emphasis is Howe's. The discussion of critics, journalists, novelists, and poets is especially apt not only because Howe as a literary critic feels at home with their work but also because he identifies so readily with their undertaking and thus is able to rescue them for us from their sinking shipwreck of cultural strangeness. His generous understanding, for example, of the late Yiddish poet, Jacob Glatstein, extending even to Glatstein's polemic espousal of a Jewish patriotism not entirely shared by Howe, illustrates in miniature what the book as a whole does with the vanishing milieu of *Yiddishkeit*. Howe pointedly juxtaposes Glatstein's "pride of self-sufficiency, his readiness to live within the narrowing circles of Yiddish," with the poet's awareness of what it means to write out of an abandoned culture: "It means that I have to be aware of Auden but Auden need never have heard of me."

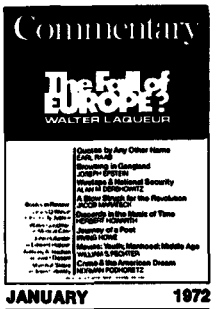
Perhaps the most striking of all the literary portraits here is that of Isaac Bashevis Singer. Singer's paradoxical project, the repeated and confident imaginative resurrection of a dead world in a dying language, is a kind of drastically foreshortened version of the historical fate of Yiddish culture in America; and apart from the difference in language, it is also an exaggerated version of Howe's underlying enterprise in *World of Our Fathers*: "A clever and sophisticated man, living in New York City, composes stories about Frampol, Bilgoray, Kreshev, as if they were still there, as if the world of the past were radiantly alive: the hasidim still dancing, the rabbis still pondering, the children still studying, the poor still starving, and nothing yet in ashes." The imaginative assertion of life in contradiction to grim historical fact is precisely the tension which Howe's own writing incorporates. The elegiac note at the end

WHILE THEY LAST—

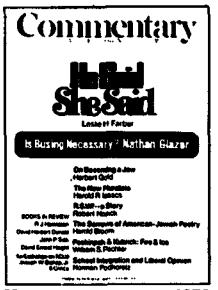
Complete your file of Commentary or send for past issues with articles of special interest—like those shown here—at $3.00 each.



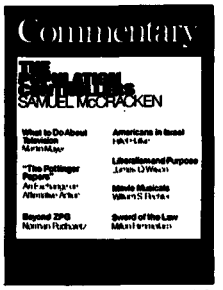
OCTOBER 1971



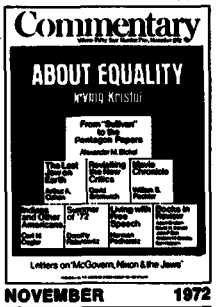
JANUARY 1972



MARCH 1972

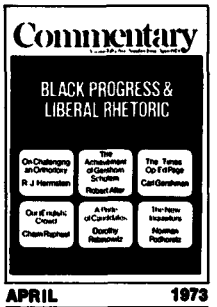


MAY 1972

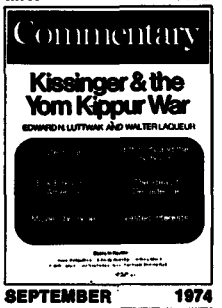


NOVEMBER 1972

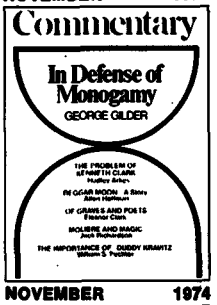
OCTOBER 1973



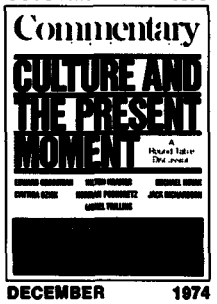
APRIL 1973



SEPTEMBER 1974

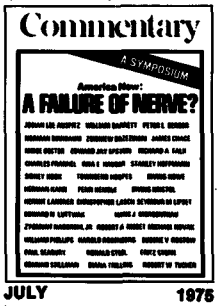


NOVEMBER 1974

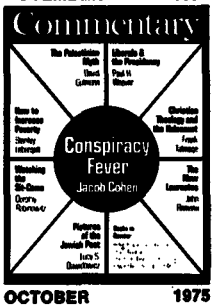


DECEMBER 1974

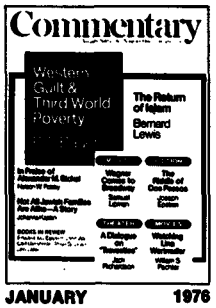
JANUARY 1975



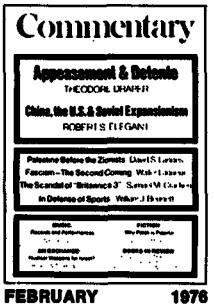
JULY 1975



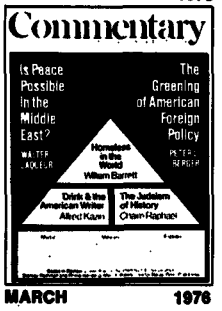
OCTOBER 1975



JANUARY 1976



FEBRUARY 1976



MARCH 1976

In limited quantities, most issues from recent years are still available—as listed below. **CIRCLE THE ONES YOU WANT,** and return the form with prepayment—promptly, to insure receiving those in short supply.

Commentary, 165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

Enclosed is my check for $_____ for the _____ back issues circled below at $3 each including postage and handling.

1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Jan	Jan	—	—	Jan	—	Jan	Jan	Jan
Feb	Feb	—	Feb	Feb	—	Feb	Feb	Feb
Mar	Mar	—	Mar	Mar	Mar	—	Mar	Mar
Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	
May	—	—	May	May	May	May	May	
June	June	—	June	June	—	—	June	
—	July	—	July	July	July	July	July	
—	Aug	Aug	—	—	Aug	Aug	Aug	
Sept	—	Sept	Sept	Sept	—	Sept	Sept	
Oct	Oct	—	Oct	—	Oct	Oct	Oct	
Nov	—	—	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	
Dec	—	—	Dec	—	Dec	Dec	Dec	

Name_____

Address_____

City, State & Zip Code_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

here is necessary, for to omit it would misrepresent the fundamental fact of ephemerality that has conditioned the flourishing of modern Yiddish culture; but throughout the book, Howe is able to hold the inevitable elegiac perspective in just proportion.

IN HIS prolific career, Howe has been a critic, editor, historian, and polemicist, but nowhere else has he realized so fully his vocation as a writer, because here he has a long, richly variegated narrative to execute, a narrative that has the most crucial personal relevance for him. It is fitting that *World of Our Fathers* should conclude with a celebration of the story itself, in a gesture that Howe as storyteller has abundantly earned: "The story of the immigrant Jew is all but done." There is, of course, pointed ambiguity in this use of "story," referring to the actual historical experience now almost ended and to the writer's account of it finally drawing to a close. He concludes:

> Like all stories of human striving, it ought to be complete, with its beginning and its end, at rest in fulfillment and at ease with failure. A story is the essential unit of our life, offering the magical imperatives of "so it began" and "so it came to an end." A story encompasses us, justifies our stay, prepares our leaving. Here, in these pages, is the story of the Jews, bedraggled and inspired, who came from Eastern Europe. Let us now praise obscure men.

Oil

MAKING DEMOCRACY SAFE FOR OIL. By CHRISTOPHER T. RAND. *Atlantic-Little, Brown. 422 pp. $10.00.*

MULTINATIONAL OIL. By NEIL H. JACOBY. *Macmillan. 323 pp. $15.00.*

THE SEVEN SISTERS. By ANTHONY SAMPSON. *Viking. 334 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY MARSH

THE giant oil companies are the prototypical multinational corporations, with integrated production, refining, and distribution facilities and billions of dollars' worth of investments spread over the whole world. Their spectacular growth in the post-World War II period was a vital part of the ever-increasing prosperity of the world economy in those years. But the success of the 1973 Arab oil embargo and its aftermath—OPEC domination of the world petroleum market—have brought about a dramatic shift in the influence of the companies and, even more importantly, in the amount of support they can command from their home governments in the United States and Western Europe. This shift has been widely taken as a harbinger of changes in the world balance of power, as the countries of the Third World move to strengthen their control over the resources lying within their borders. The evolution of the relationship between the oil companies and the governments of the major producers and consumers of oil with whom they interact is therefore a subject of compelling interest, both for what it can tell us about how we arrived at our present situation and for the light it can cast on likely future developments. The three books under review approach the subject from different viewpoints, but before these viewpoints can be properly appreciated, it might be helpful to sketch out the evolution of the petroleum industry itself.

For the first half of this century, coal was the primary source of energy for most of the world. In the United States, with its early reliance on the automobile, major development of massive domestic oil reserves began early, and foreign oil production was only a minor concern. Because of the strength of imperial British influence in the 1920's, and of the depressed nature of the world petroleum market in the 1930's, U.S.-owned companies had only a restricted share in the Middle East until World War II. While Standard Oil of New Jersey (now Exxon) and Socony Vacuum (now Mobil) held a fraction of Iraqi production, Gulf had a half-share in an as-yet-unproducing Kuwait, and Standard Oil of California (Socal) and Texaco had joined together to begin exploration in Saudi Arabia.

Following the war, the demand for oil grew spectacularly. With the reconstruction and expansion of the Western European and Japanese economies being fueled primarily by Middle Eastern oil, production in the Persian Gulf soon caught up with and overtook U.S. domestic production. The discovery of vast new oilfields in Africa added Algeria, Libya, and Nigeria to the list of major producers in the late 1950's and 1960's. Throughout this period of expansion, the giant multinationals played a leading role. Socal and Texaco now shared Saudi Arabian production with Exxon and Mobil; Kuwaiti production was still divided between British Petroleum (BP) and Gulf, but the latter took on Royal Dutch/Shell to dispose of the huge amounts of oil it could not sell through its own outlets. BP (known then as Anglo-Iranian), was the sole concessionaire in Iran before 1951, but became merely the leading member of the consortium which controlled production there after the hiatus following nationalization in 1951. The new consortium included all the other major companies as well as a number of independents and the Iranian National Oil Company.

The overlapping among different companies insured that enough common knowledge was shared to avoid the gross discrepancies between supply and demand which would have caused drastic swings in price. But the prodigious nature of Middle Eastern wells meant that there was always a danger of surplus production, and so the price of oil actually fell, in real terms, between 1948 and 1970. Before World War II, the price of oil had been set in relation to the price of Texas oil, the largest source then available to make up shortages on the international market. After the war, the predominance of the Middle East in surplus capacity should logically have led to the setting of the world price in conformity with the marginal cost of production there, which was (and remains) something on the order of 10 cents per barrel (a barrel of oil contains 42 U.S. gallons). Because the major

JEFFREY MARSH *is a consultant on energy economics.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

oil companies had large investments in the U.S., however, the official or "posted" price at the Persian Gulf was set so that the selling price for Persian Gulf and Texas oil would be the same.

As Middle Eastern production soared, U.S. domestic production began to be outstripped by demand; beginning in the 1950's, as a result of political pressures on the part of domestic oil producers, and for considerations of national security, strict import controls were imposed by the government; the U.S. market thus came to be isolated from the world market and there was no longer a need for a connection between the domestic and the world price of oil. Then, in 1956, following the Suez crisis and the closure of the Canal, major fears set in of a world shortage of oil. Overreaction actually led to a surplus, however, and in 1959 and 1960 the companies decided to lower the posted price. This was the main impetus behind the formation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, whereby the governments of the most important producing countries banded together to increase their strength at the expense of the companies.

Earlier attempts at the exercise of national power had not been notably successful; the effects of the 1951 Iranian nationalization had been blunted by the solidarity of the oil companies in observing the boycott imposed by the expropriated BP, and attempts at unified Arab action during the Suez war had even poorer long-term results. Nor was the new OPEC an overnight success; while the governments concerned made incremental gains, the oil flow and balance of economic power continued much as before. The Six-Day War of 1967 led to a flurry of activity, including temporary shutdowns of production in a number of countries, but even the extended closing of the Suez Canal after June 1967 had much less effect on the burgeoning oil trade than had the much shorter closing of 1956-57.

In the late 1960's, this long-standing situation began to change. The U.S., itself importing an ever-

לחיים*

ATLANTA'S FINEST ALL KOSHER KITCHEN OPENS AT THE WORLD'S TALLEST HOTEL.

The new Peachtree Plaza is the only hotel in Atlanta equipped with an exclusively kosher kitchen. Our new facility will be used *only* for kosher functions —and *never* for any other purpose.

Now Jewish organizations and individuals can enjoy kashruth in the world's most spectacular hotel, right in the middle of exciting Peachtree Center. Let us help you plan your banquets, conventions, dinners and parties in grand style. For details, please call Mr. Manfred Moritz at (404) 659-1400.

PEACHTREE PLAZA HOTEL
IN PEACHTREE CENTER
WESTERN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS
Partners in travel with United Airlines

*L'CHAIM (To Life)

WORLD OF OUR FATHERS

THE JOURNEY OF THE EAST EUROPEAN JEWS TO AMERICA AND THE LIFE THEY FOUND AND MADE

IRVING HOWE

Massive in scope, rich in detail, this is a monumental study of American Jewry— as it was, as it is, and as it is becoming.

A Book-of-the-Month Club Featured Alternate
A Jewish Book Club Main Selection

714 pages Illustrated with 48 pages of photographs plus drawings $14.95

HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ERICA JONG SAYS:

". . . an awe-inspiring array of etymological edibles, a lasagna for the linguist, a pheast for the phonetician and a luscious luncheon for even the most dilettantish logodaedalian. A thoroughly delicious book."

HOWARD FAST SAYS:

". . . a delicious and effective medicine. I know of no other book which treats words, usage and language with so much wit, affection and painless erudition . . . this is a book to be read with pleasure, to be quoted with relish and to be treasured by all who respect our language."

Light Refractions

Thomas H. Middleton

Deluxe, boxed edition
500 numbered copies
signed by the author. $30. postpaid

Regular Edition $ 6. postpaid

Payment must accompany order

Available only from

VERBATIM

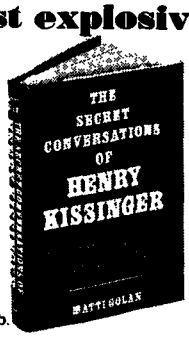
ESSEX, CONN. 06426 V

Straight from the Middle East cauldron comes one of the year's most explosive books!

THE SECRET CONVERSATIONS OF HENRY KISSINGER

Step-by-Step Diplomacy in the Middle East

By MATTI GOLAN



An Alternate Selection of The Book-of-the-Month Club.

The book that rips through the veils of secrecy obscuring the truth about Henry Kissinger and the key people who figured in the savage 1973 war. The book that finally broke through months of opposition from Israeli censors. $8.95

The inside story of outrageous events!

Available at leading bookstores.

NYT Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co.
Dept 982, 10 East 53rd Street,
New York, N.Y. 10022

Enclosed please find my check or money order in the amount of_____ for_____ copies of *The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger* @ $8.95 a copy. If I find this book unsuitable for any reason I may return this order within 10 days and my money will be refunded in full. Offer expires 9/31/76. Add $.75 for shipping and handling.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Signature_____

New York and Illinois residents add appropriate sales tax.

A

growing fraction of its petroleum needs, was no longer able to act as a guarantor of world oil sufficiency, and the producing nations began to take matters into their own hands. In Libya the new revolutionary government decided in 1969 that the extremely favorable terms obtained by the producing companies under the old regime were unacceptable. When faced with threats of expropriation, Occidental Oil, an independent company, found itself unable to persuade the majors to support it by enforcing a strict boycott, as had been done for BP almost twenty years earlier; it succumbed to Libya's demands, and the rest of the oil companies followed in short order.

Negotiations between the oil companies and a unified OPEC in 1970 and 1971 resulted in unprecedented gains by the latter. The posted price was increased sharply, and schedules were established for the transfer of greater shares of the oil production and reserves to the governments of the countries involved. Scarcely was the ink dry on each agreement when OPEC members declared it unsatisfactory and demanded renegotiation.

This process climaxed in October 1973, in the midst of the Yom Kippur war, when the announcement of a cutback in Arab oil production and an embargo on countries regarded as favoring Israel was followed immediately by a unilateral quadrupling by OPEC of the posted price. While the embargo was ended after several months, the world has learned to live with the drastically increased oil prices, which have since been raised again several times. The Western world has been plunged into a recession and the developing nations have been set back in their climb to industrialization. OPEC's famous victory has emboldened the major producers of a wide range of commodities to demand more favorable terms of trade, and encouraged the major consumers to be more accommodating.

Nevertheless, the demand for oil has slumped quite dramatically, so that even the greatly lowered level of production now controlled by OPEC has resulted in a worldwide surplus. The vast incomes accruing to OPEC members are not enough for the ambitious development plans of such capital-hungry nations as Nigeria, Iran, and Venezuela, which have already discounted the amounts they expect to earn at the new prices and are calling for new price increases. Meanwhile, the less populated OPEC members, notably Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms, are afraid of choking on too much new wealth; the strains in the cartel are becoming apparent.

In general, cartels collapse when they succeed in raising the price of their product so high that the supply exceeds the demand. Consumers are then able to bring the price down by playing off the individual producers against one another as each seeks to dispose of his own surplus production. Through the 1960's, the producing companies were able to keep prices stable at a figure much higher than the cost of production by their ability to prevent the development of the huge potential surplus of oil. They were simultaneously able to prevent prices from rising too high by discouraging production in any country whose terms they considered exorbitant. But in underestimating the growth rate of world demand in the early 1970's, they had nowhere to turn when OPEC began to flex its muscles. With the consumer governments unwilling to confront OPEC, the West's supine reaction to the events of 1973 became inevitable.

IF THE main facts in the history of the oil industry can be agreed upon, there is little agreement on the role played by the major companies in setting prices, and much questioning of the profits made by the industry both before and after the events of 1973.

Of the three authors whose books on the subject are being considered here, the most jaundiced in this respect is Christopher Rand, a journalist who has worked both for a major oil company and for the Cairo periodical, *Arab Observer*. As is evident from the title of his book, Rand regards the oil companies as outright villains whose single-minded devotion to maximizing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

profits has alienated the major producing countries and caused the U.S. government to adopt policies detrimental to the consumer of petroleum products. He maintains that the interlocking structure of the oil industry, whereby each major company has sufficient knowledge of the plans of its fellows to restrain competition from bringing prices down, has kept oil prices since the October 1973 war higher than they should have been; the fact that the companies can pass price increases on to the consumer as fast as OPEC imposes them has given them little incentive to bargain hard, in Rand's view.

Anthony Sampson is a British journalist who has previously written on multinational business both as a component of the European economy and as a significant phenomenon in its own right. While *The Seven Sisters* is broader in scope than *Making Democracy Safe for Oil*—it includes more information on the industry's early years, on the non-U.S. majors Royal Dutch/Shell and BP, and on the international industry outside the Middle East—and while it is more enjoyable to read, its characteristic tone being urbane rather than bitter, Sampson's assessment of the evolution of the industry is basically similar to Rand's. Lovers of the devil theory of history will find further confirmation here of their views; among Sampson's wealth of anecdotes is a fascinating vignette that traces Texaco's uncharacteristic sponsorship of the Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts to the unfavorable publicity the company suffered when it was revealed that it had been generously financing a diplomatic emissary from Nazi Germany.

An entirely different picture emerges from Neil Jacoby's book. Jacoby, a prominent economist, has analyzed the evolution of the international petroleum market from a general perspective which disregards the details of the internal workings of the oil companies. He examines the evolution of such indicators as the degree of concentration in the industry, the number of new firms entering the market, and the behavior of supply, demand, and price. Jacoby concludes that, regardless of the mechanism by which the final result has come about, the international petroleum market has behaved just as a competitive free market might have been expected to behave.

WHEN it comes to the vital question of what the future holds, the three authors differ again, but in a surprisingly new way. Jacoby, the ideologue of the free market, fears that the invisible hand has become paralyzed by the formation of the OPEC cartel, which has stripped the companies of whatever independent power they possessed. He urges the consuming and producing governments to negotiate a commodity agreement that would prescribe worldwide levels of production and prices, with the companies playing the role of middlemen in the normal bargaining process.

Rand, on the other hand, with his eye fixed only on the companies, wants the government to prevent the majors from colluding; this alone, he believes, would have a detrimental effect on the cohesion of the cartel; once overt competition emerges within OPEC, prices will come down, he contends. Rand, in other words, wants to let OPEC operate as a free market, but would forbid the oil companies to do the same.

Sampson tends more toward the Jacoby view, and is less confident than Rand that the price will drop substantially. As he says, the biggest producer, Saudi Arabia, is willing to restrict production as much as necessary because it has a limited need for increased income. Moreover, the major consuming countries are not united in a desire for lower prices—the U.S. because of its policy of energy independence, which must henceforth rely on high-priced alternative sources, and England because of its own imminent debut as a major producer of high-cost North Sea oil. Yet despite the prospect of high oil prices, or even because of it, Sampson is hopeful. Envisioning a new, automatic mechanism for the transfer of wealth from the rich to some of the previously poor nations, he believes that the need to assure stable

Suicide:
Inside and Out
David K. Reynolds and Norman L. Faberow

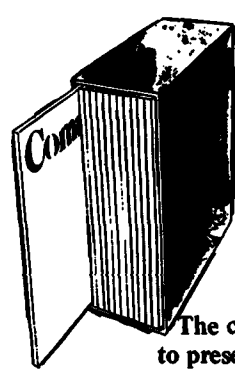
"Mental hospitals have rules and regulations—but those rules and regulations don't keep people alive. Only other people can keep people alive."
—Dr. David K. Reynolds

For this unique examination of the causes of suicide among psychiatric patients, Reynolds adopted the identity of a severly depressed young war veteran, received treatment in a psychiatric hospital, and wrote his account of the interaction between his social world and his psychological functioning.
240 pages, $10.95

At bookstores

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
BERKELEY 94720

COMMENTARY SLIPCASE



An elegant addition to your library shelves.

The convenient way to preserve and organize your issues of Commentary. Each 9" x 12" slipcase of blue Boltoflex with "Commentary" stamped in gold-leaf, holds 12 issues.
1-3 slipcases $5.00 ea. / 4-9 slipcases $4.50 ea.
10 or more slipcases $4.00 ea.
(add 25 cents per slipcase for shipping.)

COMMENTARY 165 East 56th St., N.Y.C. 10022
Gentlemen:
Please send me ____Slipcases at $ ____ea.
I enclose my check or money order for a total of $ _____.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

energy supplies will force a long overdue recognition of global interdependence.

WHILE the economic issues discussed by all three authors are undeniably important, all three are profoundly ahistorical in their analyses and prescriptions. If the voluntary abdication of power shown by the West in its response to the events of October 1973 proves to be a *long-term phenomenon, as it* seems increasingly likely to be, then more than economics is involved here. Early fears that the huge amounts of money flowing to the OPEC nations would never come back may have now been eased, but the lesson that power goes along with control over oil is still being learned. The current rulers of the OPEC nations are learning that lesson rapidly, more rapidly than the West.

The Socialist Myth

AMBIGUOUS LEGACY: THE LEFT IN AMERICAN POLITICS. By JAMES WEINSTEIN. *Franklin Watts/New Viewpoints. 179 pages. $9.00.*

Reviewed by
BERNARD K. JOHNPOLL

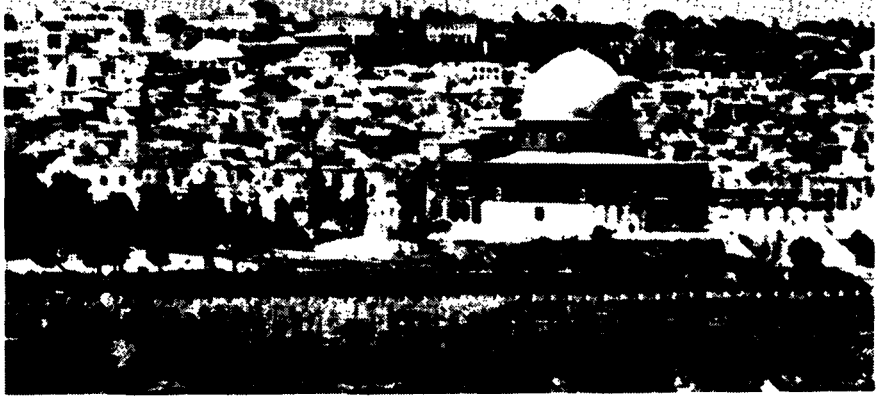
AMERICAN Marxist movements, it is now almost universally agreed, have been a collective failure. Even at its height, more than sixty years ago, the Socialist party, the most successful of the movements, had the support of only a minuscule portion of the working class of this country. Since then the organized political Left has declined steadily; today it is almost totally ignored except as an interesting subject of scholarly nostalgia.

BERNARD K. JOHNPOLL *is professor of political science at the State University of New York at Albany.*

The cause of this failure has engrossed observers from the earliest days of the century. Analyses have placed the blame variously on the quasi-religious nature of the socialist movements—an argument put forward most eloquently by Daniel Bell; on the relative prosperity of the American working class—a *rationale first espoused by Werner* Sombart in 1906; on the failure of the Socialist party to accept the revolutionary trade-unionism preached between 1901 and 1916 by its left wing—a thesis on which Ira Kipnis based a quasi-history of the pre-1912 party; on the irrationality of socialism itself—the position of Martin Diamond and other conservative political thinkers; and on internal feuding in the movement, particularly the Communist split of 1919-21—a point argued vigorously by James Weinstein in his 1970 book, *The Decline of American Socialism, 1912-1925.* Each of the explanations has considerable validity; none of them, taken individually, is completely accurate.

In his new book James Weinstein addresses himself to this problem once again. Unfortunately, his aim is less historical than polemical. Where a historian first accumulates facts and then attempts to develop a hypothesis, Weinstein first establishes the theory he has decided to prove, and then sets about fitting those limited facts which support his thesis into a mold whose primary aim is to bolster his position.

His hope, Weinstein announces, is to resurrect the socialist movement of yore. He proposes to establish a new party which, eschewing the errors of the past, will unite within itself the Black Liberation, Women's Liberation, and working-class political movements (such as they are). To prove the feasibility of such a party, he sets out to examine the American socialist and Communist movements, with an excursion into the New Left of the last decade and its offspring. His new and, ostensibly, invincible movement, will, he suggests, make "the need for socialism the major

"Rich in scenes... of Biblical significance."*
Jerusalem the Holy by MICHAEL AVI-YONAH
Illustrated with 130 photographs, 30 in full color
"This handsome medium-format book with its 130 photos (one panoramic double-foldout of Jerusalem) that includes 30 in full color is an attractive buy. It is a visual bringing-to-life of the ancient and historically embattled city and its hilly environs, as they appear today, and as such is movingly evocative, rich in its glimpses of scenes and sites of Biblical significance. . . . Along with the marginal commentaries [is] a concise, thoughtful and even-handed prologue describing the history and religious traditions. . . . Chronology of 4000 years of Jerusalem's history."—*Publisher's Weekly*"
$10.00 hardcover/at your bookstore or from
SCHOCKEN BOOKS 200 Madison Avenue, New York 10016


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

political issue of the 1970's and 1980's."

Weinstein's intention may or may not be laudable, but his argument is faulted by limited and, at times, misleading data culled from secondary sources. And his analysis is, at best, simplistic. He claims, for example, that two closely related factors—syndicalism and reformism—caused the old Socialist party of America to disintegrate. His argument is based on the assumption that syndicalism, or trade-unionism, is, by its very nature, precluded from being a socialist or even a revolutionary ideology, since it is limited to the struggle for immediate improvement of conditions rather than for long-range social revolution. The syndicalist perversion, according to Weinstein, reached its height in the 1919-21 Communist breakaway from the still-vital Socialist party.

Facts do not bear out Weinstein's contentions. Syndicalism and reformism did help destroy the Socialist party—but not in the way he suggests. And the party which was destroyed in 1919 was a mere shadow of its old self. As early as 1901, the year of the party's founding, there was among the Socialists a significant group which rejected the whole idea of reform. These "impossiblists" insisted that the sole hope for the American working class was revolution—the complete abolition of the corrupt capitalist system and the substitution of a socialist utopia. They argued that reform would merely serve the needs of capitalism—by making society more livable—and would thus prolong the agony of working-class exploitation. This was an interesting topic for debate, but it hardly offered a practical approach to politics, as Socialists elected to public office soon discovered.

Socialist politicians recognized that they would face political extinction if they ignored immediate issues and the needs and desires of the working class they were elected to represent. But this fact of life did not bother the intellectuals who dominated the anti-reform wing of the party and who were repelled by practical politics. These intellectuals—most notably William English Walling, Frank Bohn, Hermon Titus, and Robert Rives LaMonte—rejected political activity and opted instead for revolutionary syndicalism, which they labeled "Industrial Socialism." They tied their hopes to the Industrial Workers of the World, and assailed and ridiculed the Socialist party leadership as lackeys of the corrupt American Federation of Labor and slaves to the ballot box. The intellectuals helped tear the party asunder by their anti-political activity, and in this they were joined by a collection of irresponsible syndicalists—including William "Big Bill" Heywood, Vincent St. John, and William Z. Foster.

It cannot be said that the more "political" Socialists served the cause of socialism any better, however. Between 1911 and 1913 nineteen Socialists served in the legislatures of nine states. They introduced approximately two hundred measures of political and social reform, but not a single socialist proposal. Most of the bills introduced by Socialist legislators merely duplicated what progressives—independents, Bull Moosers, progressive Republicans or Democrats—had already proposed. The result was an electoral disaster for Socialists in 1916, one from which the party would never be able to recover. In California, for example, the election of the progressive Hiram Johnson erased the once-potent Socialist party of that state. In North Dakota, the Non-Partisan League captured the Republican party in 1916, enacted a platform of agrarian reform, and thus eliminated the Socialist party there. The same happened in Minnesota a year later.

Weinstein argues that the Socialist party continued in vibrant existence until 1919-21, when the Communist split tore it apart. During 1916-19, he contends, all that changed was the center of Socialist strength: from West to East. But the fact is that in 1916 almost half of its one million supporters deserted the Socialist party to vote for Woodrow Wilson. The deser-

The Jewish Expression
Edited by Judah Goldin

In this classic collection, once again available, leading modern scholars examine and interpret 3,000 years of Jewish literature and history. The essays study the actions and institutions of the Jewish people as well as their literary tradition. c. $17.50 p. $5.95

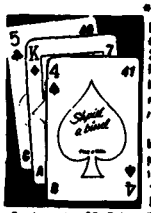
Essential Works of Socialism
Edited by Irving Howe

The authoritative one-volume anthology of major socialist writings, is now once more available. Offering a historical perspective of democratic socialism from Marx to contemporary writers, it is the essential resource for understanding socialist thought. c. $20.00 p. $8.95

YALE Yale University Press New Haven and London 1976

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The most intellectual playing cards ever invented*... also teach Yiddish as you play



* Because ordinary playing cards use one corner; O-Shlemiel uses three! Play 24 NEW GAMES like "Tsuris" where you meld words or cards or numbers

LAUGH over 54 handy Yiddish words or phrases (and translations) while playing regular games like Canasta.

Single pocket $5. Deluxe Double Gift Pack $8.50 (NY residents add tax.) Add 50c each for postage & handling. No C.O.D.'s. Send check or money order to

ORIGINALS ONLY CO. Dept. C
15 W. 44 Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

TEACHERS ADMINISTRATORS

CURRENT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE OPENINGS LIST IN U.S. $5.95
ABROAD $5.95, LEADING PLACEMENT SOURCES IN U.S. $3.95
FOREIGN $4.95
EISX, BOX 662
NEWTON, MASS. 02162

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK IN 90 DAYS

Wanted: book manuscripts on all subjects. Expert editing, design, manufacture and marketing—all under one roof. Completed books in 90 days. Low break-even. Two FREE books and literature give details, costs, success stories. Write or phone Dept. 371

EXPOSITION PRESS, INC.
900 So. Oyster Bay Rd., Hicksville, N.Y. 11801
(516) 822-5700 (212) 895-0081

PLATIGNUM ITALIC SET

Contains a fountain pen, five Italic nibs, and instruction manual, all for only $5.00... At art material & pen shops, college book stores...or send check to Pentalic Corp., 132 West 22 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011 Add 50 cents for handling.

tions, moreover, were spread among all of the states: East, West, and Central. Even in those states where the Socialist vote did show a slight rise—Oklahoma and Arizona—the Socialist percentage of the total showed a sharp decline. Weinstein to the contrary notwithstanding, the center of Socialist strength did not move from West to East; it simply evaporated.

Admittedly there was a sharp increase in both membership and voting strength during 1917-19, but this had nothing to do with socialism. Socialists made remarkable showings in New York, Ohio, Illinois, and Wisconsin elections in 1917 and 1918. Morris Hillquit ran an amazingly strong race for May or of New York in 1917 and Victor Berger came close to being elected Senator from Wisconsin in 1918. But these strong returns were primarily demonstrations against an unpopular war. Hillquit carried districts that had a preponderance of anti-Czarist Jews, anti-British Irishmen, and anti-Allied Germans. And Berger's vote was particularly strong in the German areas of Wisconson. Even Socialists conceded that these elections were merely plebiscites on the war.

The sudden upsurge in party membership during 1918 and 1919 likewise did not reflect a growing socialist consciousness in America. True, the party's dues-paying membership rose to 109,000 by May 1919; but 53 per cent of the membership was now in the foreign-language federations (party organizations of basically non-English speaking residents whose primary interest was revolution in their homelands). Most of these "October Socialists" were East Europeans momentarily enamored of the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia and were only peripherally interested in the United States. Within a year almost 90 per cent of them had withdrawn from the radical movement.

Weinstein persists in refusing to accept the obvious: that the Socialist party had, by 1919, disintegrated for a myriad of reasons; and that its demise could not have been stemmed. The 1919 Communist split was an insignificant *coup de grâce.*

As for Weinstein's treatment of the Communist party, it is little better than his study of the Socialists. He believes that the Communist party was *the* Marxist movement in the United States between 1930 and 1957, and he again uses selective data—gleaned from secondary sources—to prove his point. Even a cursory examination of the record would indicate that the party was neither Marxist nor socialist.

Of all the ostensibly radical movements which followed the Socialist party to the revolutionary fore, none seemed more likely to succeed than the Communist party of the 1930's. Admittedly, its rhetoric was pure hyperbole, and its publications appeared to be verbatim translations—in both content and style—from the Russian. But its predictions of imminent economic collapse and of the concomitant immiseration of America's working and middle classes were being borne out; capitalism was in a state of complete disintegration. Moreover, professional anti-radical politicians, who saw in their violent opposition to the tiny Communist movement a means of personal advancement, had created an aura of "immediate revolutionary potential" about the party.

It should thus have followed that the Communist party would become a major factor in the development of a depression-generated Marxist movement. It did not. Behind the failure of the Communist party were three major causes: (1) the party was completely subjugated to the momentary needs of the Soviet government; (2) it was unable to relate to the American social environment; and (3) American workingmen, concerned primarily with economic relief rather than with the ultimate overthrow of the capitalist system, were repelled by the foreign-sounding rhetoric of revolution. Each of these elements played an equal part in preventing the Communist party from becoming a viable organization; the latter two were the products of the first.

In his treatment of the Communist party Weinstein overemphasizes its Marxist rhetoric and minimizes (although he does not ignore) its total obeisance to the So-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

viet Union. He blames the Communists' incessant shifts of line and persistent betrayal of principle on what he calls their "syndicalism," rather than on their toadying to Moscow. And yet anyone who studies the party and its gyrations from 1920 to 1957 must conclude that it was little more than a puppet controlled from the Kremlin, totally lacking in genuine revolutionary consciousness.

Weinstein's treatment of the New Left is hardly better than his analysis of the Socialist or Communist parties. He ignores the dishonesty and subterfuge which permeated the early SDS, the struggles for power within the movement in the earliest days of its existence—struggles, essentially, for the jobs and funds its founders were able to extort from the labor-oriented League for Industrial Democracy and some progressive unions. He ignores the fact that SDS could scarcely win support on any campus on any issue except Vietnam. His treatment of the Weathermen ignores the utter frustration which engulfed the SDS leadership on account of its failure to attract a significant following. SDS, like all earlier "socialist" movements, degenerated because it was irrelevant to the United States and to the working class for which it claimed to be fighting.

WEINSTEIN's dream of a new major socialist party in the United States is also doomed to failure, for like his predecessors he fails to show the slightest appreciation for the reality of history. The new "socialist" movement he proposes is, like the old Communist alliance of the late 1930's, little more than a popular front. It would be composed of disparate "liberation" forces that more often than not are mutually antagonistic. Such a coalition could exist only during a period of détente, when the "socialist" world has proclaimed a tactical armistice in its war against pluralistic capitalism—indeed, Weinstein's book may itself be seen as a symptom of détente. Once this policy, and the situation it is intended to address, undergo a change, the popular

An attractive, inexpensive family edition of—

THE PASSOVER HAGGADAH

With English translation, introduction, explanations, and commentaries, based on the Haggadah studies of E. D. Goldschmidt. Edited by Nahum Glatzer.

Illustrated with woodcuts from the famous Prague Haggadah of 1526 • 126 pages • available as a sturdy softcover edition • stain and grease resistant

Now everyone can be on the same page of the Haggadah at the same time! Unique among the many editions of the Haggadah that are available, this volume—edited by the distinguished scholar Nahum Glatzer—is a veritable encyclopedia in miniature, a source-book of fascinating lore pertaining to every aspect—from the simplest to the most abstruse—of the ancient festival of Passover. Commentaries and essays by such distinguished scholars and thinkers as Solomon Zeitlin, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, buttress a text thoroughly annotated to provide guidance and illumination from the first Kiddush through the final singing of Had Gadya. With the help of this Haggadah—beautifully clear, legible, and compact—even a relative newcomer to the patriarchal role can guide his family through the wonderful intricacies of the Passover ritual—whether he chooses to preside over an elaborate traditional Seder, or a simpler, more improvised contemporary celebration.

Softcover Haggadahs	Prices
10 or more copies	$1.95 each
1 to 9 copies	$2.25 each

PASSOVER—APRIL 14, 1976

THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB *165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022*

Please send me: ___Soft cover Haggadahs @ $_____ each. Total $_____

☐ Payment enclosed. (The Jewish Book Club pays all packing and shipping charges.)

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

front of the 1970's will go the way of the popular front of the 1930's. And another generation will have been disillusioned by the socialist myth.

October 1973

THE ROAD TO RAMADAN. By MOHAMED HEIKAL. *Quadrangle. 295 pp. $8.95.*

THE WAR OF ATONEMENT. By CHAIM HERZOG. *Little, Brown. 291 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH SHATTAN

IN BOTH these remarkably similar accounts of the events leading up to the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, fact and fiction are hopelessly entangled. That this should be so in Mohamed Heikal's case is only to be expected: Heikal, former editor of Egypt's most important newspaper, *Al-Ahram,* has been closely associated with the Egyptian regime, a regime not noted for its honesty. The case of Chaim Herzog, now Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, is less easily explained.

Consider Heikal's account of the Soviet decision to dispatch Russian combat pilots to Egypt to participate directly in Egypt's air-defense system. Heikal says that on January 23, 1970 President Nasser, in a secret visit to Moscow, delivered an ultimatum to Brezhnev: send combat pilots or I will resign. "There were outcries on the Russian side," writes Heikal. The Soviets pleaded with Nasser: "Please let us talk things over. What is it you really want? Give us another day and we will see what can be done!" But Nasser was adamant, citing the alleged fact that children were being killed by Israeli bombing raids. Brezhnev then and there summoned the entire Politburo, and, writes Heikal, "for the first time in peacetime twelve Soviet marshals were brought in to share the deliberations of the Politburo." The Russians made up their minds:

> Brezhnev made the opening statement: "Comrade Nasser," he said, "the Soviet Union has today taken a decision fraught with grave consequences. It is a decision unlike any we have ever taken before. It will need your help in carrying out, and it will call for restraint on your part." Then we were told the number of SAM-3 batteries they were going to give us and the positions in which they would be placed, and the number of men who would come with them. Eighty Soviet aircraft were going to be sent. . . .

Heikal's description of the Soviet decision to become involved directly in Egypt's air defense is utterly preposterous. Even the strongest admirer of totalitarian efficiency would not suggest that the Politburo could ever arrive at a decision "fraught with grave consequences" in the course of an eight-hour day. Nor is the Soviet Union in the habit of being bullied by its clients. Lastly, Nasser's reference to Egyptian children killed in Israeli bombing raids does not ring true. An Israeli plane did bomb an Egyptian school by mistake, but the attack occurred in April 1971, three months after Nasser's trip to Moscow.

Unfortunately, Herzog's account of the Soviet Union's operational involvement in Egypt's air defense is no different from Heikal's:

> The [Israeli] decision to bomb Egypt in depth would appear to have been a major error in many respects. Politically the raids failed to achieve their objectives and Nasser's authority was in no way undermined. . . . However, the most important development was a secret visit made by Nasser to Moscow in January 1970. During his visit Nasser presented the military dilemma facing the Egyptians as a result of the Israeli attacks and also the problems which might face his regime if these attacks were to persevere. . . . There is no doubt but that the Israeli decision to bomb Egypt in depth constituted a major turning point in the Middle East and created a situation which led President Nasser to open up Egypt not only to Soviet advisers but also to Soviet combat units.

As a matter of fact, there is *considerable* doubt as to whether Israel's decision to bomb Egypt in depth "constituted a major turning point" in the Arab-Israeli conflict. A significant body of evidence—much of it gathered by Israel's intelligence services—suggests that the Soviet decision to become more involved was actually taken at the end of October or the beginning of November 1969, well before Israel's deep-penetration raids began, when it became clear to the Soviets that their anti-aircraft defenses had failed in the first phase of the War of Attrition. This view has been given currency within Israel by, among others, Yigal Allon.*

In addition, as Professor Uri Ra'anan has pointed out, as early as November 1969 a Warsaw Pact gathering had endorsed a proposal to send Soviet military elements to Egypt to take over a portion of the combat duties there. "It seems most unlikely," Ra'anan has written, "that as complex, hazardous, and difficult an enterprise as the Soviet build-up in Egypt, in the face of a hot war with a skillful and daring adversary like the Israelis, a long distance from the Soviet homeland, connected by a slender life-line that might be cut any time by a hostile U.S. Sixth Fleet, could have been conceived, planned *ab initio* in all its mass of details—especially considering Egyptian conditions—and actually implemented in a matter of a few weeks."

Now, it may well serve the interests of both Egypt and the Soviet Union to present the Soviet intervention in Egypt as merely a *reaction* to Israeli provocation. But it is a cause for wonder when Chaim Herzog bases his own account of the Soviet involvement on such a dubious reconstruction of events.

Heikal's account of Sadat's now nearly legendary "expulsion" of some 21,000 Soviet "advisers" from Egypt in July 1972 is another case in point. According to Heikal, Sadat decided to expel the Russians because of "evasion and delay over the delivery of arms to which, he claimed, he had been continuously subjected." Of course, this hardly constitutes an explanation:

JOSEPH SHATTAN *is a doctoral candidate at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and former executive director of the Youth Institute for Peace in the Middle East.*

* See his "The Soviet Involvement in the Arab-Israeli Conflict" in *The USSR in the Middle East,* edited by Michael Confino and Shimon Shamir (Israel Universities Press, 1973).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it is merely a description of a certain state of affairs. Even if Sadat were genuinely dissatisfied with Soviet "evasion and delay," there must have been other factors prompting him to express that displeasure through the expulsion of troops. Heikal does not tell us what these factors were.

Nor, for that matter, does Herzog. "Sadat had come to the conclusion," he writes, "that he could not go to war with the Soviet advisers present in Egypt and while the Soviet government played about with him as it had done for the past year." Also, the "crude, gauche behavior" of the Soviet advisers had alienated the Egyptian army, "in whose ranks pressure had mounted to dispense with their services." But why did the army pressure Sadat to expel the Soviet advisers only in July 1972? Were Soviet advisers any less gauche in, say, July 1971?

In an interview with C. L. Sulzberger given on July 25, 1972, immediately after the expulsion, President Boumédienne of Algeria (of all people!) presented a more plausible assessment of the factors behind Sadat's action. According to Boumédienne, the Russians were "expelled"—that is, they left—because they had completed their mission in Egypt. This judgment is substantially confirmed by Heikal, who says that by July 1972 eighteen Egyptian teams were qualified to use the SAM-3 missiles, and the Egyptian military "considered it was time . . . to make the changeover," from Soviet personnel.

Thus, in this reading, there was nothing remarkable about the Soviet withdrawal from Egypt in July 1972. What is remarkable is that the withdrawal was presented by the press, and seen by the world, as though it were an expulsion. Sadat, however, has explained this. In an interview with a Lebanese paper (*Al Usbu' Al-'Arabi*, October 7, 1974) he said:

> Another part of the strategy of the deception was the report leaked out to the West and Israel. The report said that the missiles and complicated technological weapons in the Egyptian army had become useless with the departure of the Soviet experts. The report was backed up by detailed statements. It was so

Educational Reform with Television

THE EL SALVADOR EXPERIENCE. *John K. Mayo, Robert C. Hornik, and Emile G. McAnany.* This is a detailed report on the planning, development, and results of a unique experiment in instructional television used as an integral component of national reform embracing curriculum revision, teacher training, and new concepts of supervision and pupil evaluation. Drawing upon data gathered over a five-year period, it demonstrates how El Salvador achieved positive results where other countries failed, and concludes with an analysis of how the El Salvador experience can be applied to other developing countries. $11.50

Mass Media and National Development

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. *Wilbur Schramm.* "What Harold Lasswell did for the theory of communication and Paul Lazarsfeld for its research technique, what Lord Keynes did for the theory of development and Colin Clark for its research technique, this is what Schramm has opened the gates for all of us to try to do for communication-in-development."—*Daniel Lerner, American Journal of Sociology.* "The best guide we and the developing countries have to prepare us for the tasks and problems inherent in this reversal of the historic process of social change."—*George Gerbner, The Annals.*
Cloth, $10.00; paper, $3.25

The Political Dilemma of Popular Education

AN AFRICAN CASE. *David B. Abernethy.* "In striving for stable political development and rapid economic growth, Nigeria placed high priority on the widespread expansion of education. This case study of the development of universal primary education in southern Nigeria demonstrates that the change resulting from this emphasis was often unforeseen and that it has created new obstacles to modernization. . . . Lessons for all nations can be gleaned from this study." —*Philip C. Chamberlain, Journal of Developing Areas.*
$10.00

STANFORD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> "well-served" that the West and Israel believed it. They slept peacefully, believing that we were finished technologically and that the remaining equipment in our possession was without any value or effect.

According to Sadat, treating the Russian departure as an expulsion that left the Egyptian army untrained and helpless was part of a wider Egyptian disinformation campaign. Here again, Herzog's narrative is surprising, especially since a telling of the story that took these complicating views into account would have made a case for Soviet-Egyptian perfidy much stronger than the one he presents.

FINALLY, there is the question of when and why Sadat decided to launch the October 1973 attack. Heikal recounts a discussion with Sadat in September 1973:

> This was our last chance, the President said. If we did not seize it we should have finally missed the bus. For one thing, Egypt was not going to secure any more arms than it already had [and] so was at the peak of its military capacity. Again, from the international point of view Egypt had all the backing which had ever been dreamed of, among the Arab nations, the non-aligned, at the United Nations, and everywhere. . . . Then there was Egypt's economic situation. It would be impossible to survive the "no peace, no war" situation much longer. Without a big injection of financial aid 1974 was going to bring a crisis. The only source of aid on the scale needed was some of the Arab countries and the Arabs were not going to give Egypt another penny unless there was some movement. On the home front, people were beginning to lose patience.

These considerations, however, merely represent the general factors behind Sadat's decision. Anyone reasonably familiar with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the domestic situation in Egypt could have enumerated them: they hardly constitute a revelation. Heikal has nothing to say about the specific set of events which triggered Sadat's decision to go to war.

Herzog is more helpful. He reveals that in March 1973, following the visit of a high-level Soviet military delegation to Cairo, the Soviet Union began to ship Scud surface-to-surface missiles to Egypt. The Egyptian army, Herzog argues, needed such missiles, "which by their very existence on Egyptian soil could deter Israel from embarking on any bombing in depth," before launching an attack. Once Scud missiles began to arrive in Egypt, "the main requirement of the Egyptians before they could go to war had now been met by the Soviet Union. . . . In truth the final decision which led to war was made in the Kremlin by those who decided to supply the Scud to the Egyptians."

Unfortunately, Herzog's analysis is also incomplete. To begin with, the Scud is a Soviet tactical missile designed to carry a nuclear warhead, but the Egyptians did not have nuclear warheads in March 1973. Without a nuclear warhead, the Scud is simply a rather expensive and inefficient artillery piece, and would hardly be expected to deter the Israelis from anything.

But if in March the Egyptians did not yet possess a credible deterrent, there is some reason to believe that on September 12, 1973 the Soviet Union did in fact send two brigades of Scud surface-to-surface missiles to Egypt, *each brigade equipped with nuclear warheads.** According to the magazine where this piece of intelligence was published, both missile brigades were Soviet-manned, and at no time in the course of the war did the Russians abdicate their control over the weapons to the Egyptians. Moreover, the Soviet Union obviously wanted the United States to know about the nuclear warheads, since American reconnaissance satellites obtained photographs of uncamouflaged warheads. If this report is true, Herzog cannot be correct in saying that in April the Egyptians already had a deterrent that either they or the Soviet Union regarded as credible.

Why, then, did Sadat decide to go to war when he did? We have no way of knowing for sure, but it does seem that Egypt would not have gone to war if there had been no prior agreement between Egypt and Saudi Arabia to employ the oil weapon against the United States. After all, Egypt did not plan to seize the entire Sinai. In fact, during the war the Egyptian army hardly dared to advance beyond the protective cover of its missiles stationed on the west bank of the Suez Canal. In view of its precarious domestic situation, Egypt would hardly have embarked on a costly and dangerous military campaign if all it stood to gain was several miles of sand in the Sinai. Before committing Egypt to war, therefore, Sadat required some assurance that his military initiative would be followed by severe political and economic measures directed against the West in general and the United States in particular. It is even conceivable that the immediate purpose behind Egypt's attack was to provide Saudi Arabia and the other OPEC countries with a pretext for cutting back on oil production as a hedge against recent devaluations of the dollar.

THESE speculations are by no means conclusive, but they do, perhaps, indicate that the definitive account of the last Arab-Israeli war remains to be written. Heikal and Herzog do not ask the right questions about the war, and their answers are rarely satisfactory. In Heikal's case, this is not to be wondered at. Heikal is nothing more than a clever propagandist, and his book simply repeats arguments and analyses first advanced when he was editor of *Al-Ahram* and an acknowledged spokesman of the regime. His purpose is to popularize the Egyptian version of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the West, and especially to contrast Egyptian moderation and level-headedness with Israeli arrogance and mendacity.

As for Herzog, his failure to challenge or repudiate Egyptian claims remains a mystery and a serious defect in an otherwise smoothly written and absorbing book.

---

* See *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, November 5, 1973.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No one will drink from this cup. It's Elijah's cup. It's a tradition.
The unleavened bread is a tradition.
And the egg and bitter herbs are a tradition.

Manischewitz wishes you a happy Passover. That's a tradition, too.

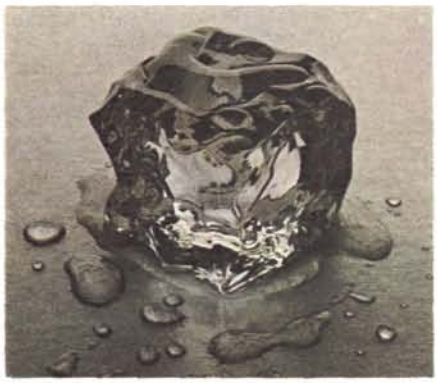
Produced and bottled under strict Rabbinical Supervision. Kashruth Certificate available upon request. Manischewitz Wine Co., New York, N.Y. 11232

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ice-Proof Scotch

What is the ideal proof for a Scotch whisky? That depends on the way the whisky is consumed and the palate of the individual. Scotch drinkers are finding that Famous Grouse, the only 90-Proof Scotch, is the ideal proof and blend for consuming "on the rocks." It's America's first Ice-Proof Scotch.

by Allen Mac Kenzie



Perhaps the most elusive quality of any Scotch whisky is the ability to retain freshness as it dilutes with ice. While no Scotch can be totally "ice-proof," it can be demonstrated that a 90-Proof Scotch will sustain its freshness substantially longer than Scotches bottled at 80, 86, or 86.8 Proof.

Our motive in presenting this demonstration is quite simple: our brand of Scotch Whisky, *Famous Grouse*, is the only Scotch now available in this country at 90 Proof. If you are an "on-the-rocks" Scotch drinker, we presume you are a seeker of long-lasting freshness and will take the time to consider our argument.

A Comparison of Proofs

To demonstrate the merits of a slightly higher proof, we performed a simple experiment: a jigger of Scotch (about 1.7 ounces) was chilled with 6 one-inch cubes, and the changes in proof were noted.

As you might expect, the proof falls rapidly during the first few minutes of cooling, but more slowly after the whisky is chilled. The diagram shows how long it takes Scotches of three different proofs to reach 45 proof when poured over ice. If proof is considered to be a measure of freshness, 90-Proof *Famous Grouse* has a 3½ minute advantage over 86.8-Proof Scotch after 18 minutes on the rocks. (Because it takes 3½ minutes longer to reach 45 proof.) Its advantage over 80-Proof Scotch is 8½ minutes.

In Praise of Character

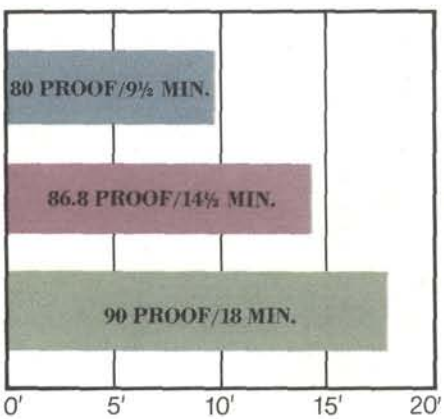
Proof, of course, is not the only influence on the flavor of a blended Scotch. The proportion of malt to grain whiskies, origins of the malts, aging methods—these are also important factors determining the relative richness of Scotch flavor.

The makers of *Famous Grouse*—Matthew Gloag & Son of Perth, Scotland—have been producing Scotch in the same family for six generations. And they have performed their most noble feat in the rich blend they created for *Famous Grouse* Scotch. Its flavor—so remarkable at the outset—holds firmly to its character during prolonged contact with ice.

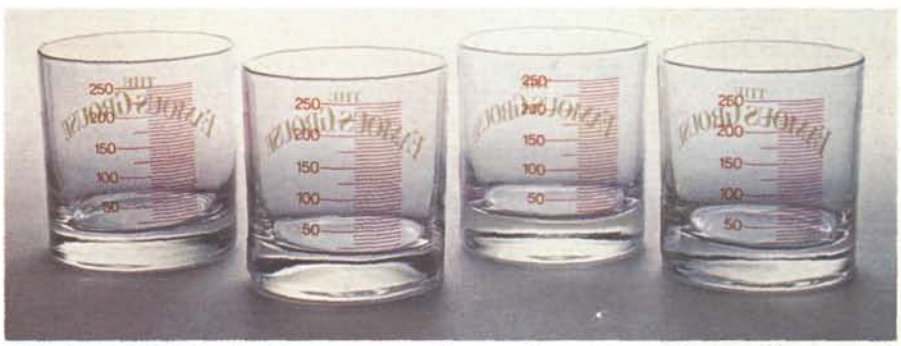
Graphs and calculations can carry you only so far in the search for a perfect Scotch

on the rocks. The ultimate experiment requires that you pour a portion of *Famous Grouse* over ice and submit the decision to your palate. In the words of the great bard, Robert Burns:

"From scenes like these,
Old Scotland's grandeur springs."



TIME IT TAKES THREE DIFFERENT SCOTCHES TO DILUTE TO 45 PROOF WHEN POURED OVER ICE IN MINUTES.



SPECIAL OFFER: Conduct your own Famous Grouse experiments. For a set of four 11-ounce "on-the-rocks" glasses (conveniently calibrated and bearing the Famous Grouse trademark), send $5.00 to: Famous Grouse Offer, Box 929—NYT-4, Wall Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10005. To comment on this advertisement or suggest future experiments, write to Mr. Allen Mac Kenzie at the same address.

90 PROOF. BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY BOTTLED IN SCOTLAND IMPORTED BY AUSTIN, NICHOLS & CO., LAWRENCEBURG, KY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED